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REVELATIONS
OF
SCHOOL-LIFE.

BY
CANTAB.

17012
“*Quanquam ridentem dicere verum
Quid vetat? Ut pueris olim dant crustula blandi
Doctores, elementa velint ut discere prima:—
Sed tamen, amoto, quæramus seria, ludo.*”

HOR. SAT. 1.



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1853.

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HOPE AND CO.,
16, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

P R E F A C E.

If it be true "That all thinking men of the present day consider the education of this country in a most unsatisfactory state."

If it be a fact "That the schoolmasters have no status, belong to no recognised body," vide Bacon's Works, edited by T. Markby, M.A., 1853.

If the late Prime Minister and present Chancellor of Oxford was compelled to acknowledge, "That bankrupt tradesmen, who

could not succeed in their trades, commenced keeping schools," *vide* Earl Derby's Inauguration Speech at Oxford.

If all these truths are undeniable, *then* the author assumes no apology is necessary for the production of the following pages.

One of the great problems of the day is, (or shortly will be) "The education of the *middle classes*." "Is that education to be a *reality*, or a *great sham*?"

The Author hopes his work will assist the anxious inquirer in the solution of this important question. When will the educator *be* considered as a worthy, respectable member of society? Not, it is to be feared, until we have a "Minister of Public Instruction," for why should the *army* and *navy* be represented in our cabinet, and not the *educator*?

The Author ventures to hope, that, as the eye of the critical reader glances at the following pages, it may not be too quick in

detecting the errors which lie upon their surface. He feels, alas ! too sensible of the many imperfections which will be easily discovered ; and he begs, as an excuse for them, to state, that the work has been written during those "leisure hours," which the Author could snatch from the daily toil of a laborious occupation.

The Author commits his book to the hands (and, he fondly hopes, to the hearts) of a generous public ; and should it be instrumental in arousing the dormant energies of the public to a serious appreciation of this long-neglected, national subject, he will consider himself more than compensated for the anxiety and mental toil necessarily connected with the production of any work.

The Author has no selfish object in view ; he is desirous to perform *one* duty, and that is, "*to do good.*"

REVELATIONS OF SCHOOL LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

It may not be altogether uninteresting to the general reader to know that my father occupied an important position in the county of Kent; being a magistrate, he was for many years Chairman of the Quarter Sessions, which were held in a neighbouring town. This station brought him constantly in contact with some of the aristocratic families, for which Kent has ever been distinguished.

My parent, too, was naturally fond of society, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than to adjourn to the principal inn, after an

arduous sessional day's labour, and there, with his brother magistrates, enjoy the "creature comforts," which would be so well provided for them by mine host of the "Red Lion." He was also a prominent leader of the political party to which he belonged, and under whose banner he had fought for many years, with great skill and success, their battles. Several massive pieces of plate, which adorned the sideboard of his dining-room, showed, beyond doubt, the estimation in which he was held by many thousands of his brother electors in this "Garden of England."

My mother was one of those amiable creatures, who would never allow the trifling concerns of life to have the slightest influence over her mind, whatever occurred she was always prepared for, ever ready to accommodate herself to the emergencies of the moment. If my father was from home, and did not return until late, or perhaps not before the following day, or if he had a large dinner party, it was equally the same to her, she would ever be cheerful, never upbraid him

for his continuous absence from home, neither would she reproach him for the frequent political and other parties that he was accustomed to have at the Hall. On the contrary, she would have everything nice and proper, and welcome his friends with the courtesy and good-heartedness of one, who was at all times glad to see the guests of her husband enjoying the hospitality of the Hall.

This passive yielding to all my father's little whims and crotchets was slowly, though with certainty, laying the foundation of a disease, which was calculated to become most fatal to the future happiness and prospects of his children ; for being of a generous, noble disposition, he confided too much to the professions of men, instead of forming an estimate of their character from a review of their actions. He always looked upon the bright side of the picture, and being himself honest in heart, and sincere in his purposes, he viewed his fellow-man through the same focus, and thus was contented to believe that all men were like himself, that even if their external character was not

quite correct, there was concealed from "mortal scan," some redeeming quality or extenuating circumstance, which, if it were made known, would set them right with the world.

Thus the things went on, year after year, until my parents were surrounded by a family of four children. I was the youngest but one, and being intended for the Church, in order that I might, in due time, possess a rich family living, which was held by an old invalidated uncle, I was sent to one of our large public schools to prepare for my academic career, where I remained until the time arrived when I was to take up my residence at college. I shall never forget the vanity which seized me upon reflecting that I was about to become my own master, my name to be associated with some of the greatest, noblest and most renowned men of the age. What a halo of brilliant tints encircled my excited brain. In one week more, and then I should have entered that arena of learning, where intellect and talent alone were to compete for honours and distinctions! how my heart beat with pride,

how my bosom heaved with delight, how I longed for an opportunity to shew the "dons" that I could do wonders! How I assured my father at least a hundred times, as we journeyed towards the "Modern Granta" that I intended to work and persevere until I had distinguished myself in a manner that no Freshman had ever done before! How all these intentions and many others were reiterated, (and in all sincerity too!) to my father before we arrived at the classical vicinity of "Alma Mater!" Here, too, he told me to be cautious with whom I associated, that I was neither to be extravagant nor niggardly in my personal expenses. "*In medio tutissimus ibis*" was an old hackneyed Latin proverb, he said, which had been his polar star through life, and he wished it to guide me in my sojourn at college. I was ever to remember that my father was a "man of Kent" who possessed a *status* in society, which he hoped I should never tarnish by any indiscretion; that I was to avoid, as fatal to my present peace and future happiness, *profligate associates*. I promised to do all that he required, although

I was so elated in anticipation of my splendid new position, that I knew scarcely anything of the purport of the long parental lecture which he had been giving me. At any rate I was resolved in my own mind to be a steady, hard-working, pleasure-denying student, and, although I did promise assent (without knowledge) to the many valuable suggestions which my father in his wisdom thought proper to bring before my notice, it must be confessed that no Freshman can imagine at first, the nature of the temptations to which all are more or less exposed. It is impossible for any young man, who goes to either of our universities with a liberal supply of money from his friends, and for the first time in his life to know that he is free from all parental restraint, to dream of the many traps and devices which are laid to entice him; so that his future too often becomes sullied with the thoughtless actions of his earlier folly, and himself a victim to his want of experience and rashness.

After looking about the town, viewing the various colleges and other places of attrac-

tion we sallied forth to my college, (Oh, the vanity of the mind!) and called upon the college tutor, to whom I was introduced, and into whose fatherly hands I was formally placed by my parent. This *Don* was a little insignificant-looking man, with an extremely unintellectual-looking face; he seemed, however, quite accustomed to the routine of college life, for he assured my father, that he would take care I had everything for my comfort and use—that he would also have an especial eye to my moral welfare! He had not the slightest doubt but that I should greatly add to the already noted character of the college. All this was said in that bland, oily kind of way, which was sure to have an overpowering influence upon the susceptibilities of my parent. After this kind of “small talk” had taken place, we left the tutor’s rooms, my father being profoundly impressed with the important fact, that of all men he had ever met, none could be compared, for gentlemanly manners and amiableness of character, to the Rev. Dusty Gubbins, the renowned tutor of ——— college.

The time at length arrived for my "Governor" to leave! He did so—and now I was alone! My father left his inexperienced, uncontaminated son in a place, where there is so much to dazzle, so much to tempt, to excite, and so many things which become at first sight so inviting to the unsophisticated mind of a Freshman!

Hastily returning to my college, I repaired to my rooms, and as my eye glanced around my new abode, I perceived a brown paper parcel, addressed to me, which, upon opening, I discovered were my "Academicals." What were my feelings at *that* moment! How soon I forgot the parting advice of my parent! "Beware my son of vanity, be not led astray by the glitter of a showy external, be not vain." This paternal admonition I had forgotten, and quickly opening the parcel, I arrayed myself in my new costume. No peacock could have been more proud of its glittering plumage, than I was with my cap and gown! I imagined I was now an important personage. I walked to and fro, viewing myself most minutely. I fancied

then I was a distinguished individual, an exalted—a great man ! I sat down in my lounging chair, and there began to ruminate upon my “glorious future.” I was so enraptured, that I fell into that kind of delicious, dreamy state of existence, which we read the “Opium Eaters” experience after an indulgence in their “soporific *drug*.” In this state, too, I began to moralize. I knew I was arrayed in the same kind of dress that some of the most clever men of this favoured country had previously worn. I was about to tread the same ground which they had so often trod, to breathe the same air, to view the same scenery, to gaze upon the same colleges and halls, to watch the rippling waves, and to listen to the undulating noise of the same beautiful little stream. All these associations appeared vividly to my excited imagination.

“If such great men,” thought I, “have been educated in these colleges, why should not their mantle descend upon some one who may still be here ; and—why not upon me ? (Oh, vanity !) They were once young—so

am I—they were probably ignorant of their brilliant future—so was I—they knew not the extent of their great abilities, until they were developed. Why may not mine exist in a cloudy, latent state? Why should not my talent show itself at some future period, making me a great—a renowned scholar? Why should I not be selected as one whose brow was worthy to be wreathed with the crown of honour, of distinction, of exalted merit?”

These were the thoughts, gentle reader, which haunted my visionary mind, on the first evening of my being a recognized member of my distinguished university; I could neither sleep nor rest for thinking upon the many wonderful things which were in store for me, as well as from reiterating the good resolutions, which I intended to carry out; indeed, I may truly say, that *then* I resolved to be a student, that my *sole*, entire object should be study; that no temptation should seduce, no companion persuade, no gratification of my pride should succeed, to induce me to break these serious

resolves. At that moment I felt that I would study hard—would endeavour to carry out the wishes of my parent to their fullest extent—would go on with a steadiness, a regularity that nothing should shake!

Alas! how many young men have made similar resolutions; how *few*, if any, have ever realized them, in all their integrity and fulness!

But I must not anticipate; my present purpose is not to depict a college life, a path which has been so often trodden by men of known ability—of far more extensive knowledge of human nature—men who have portrayed, with consummate skill and great truthfulness, the various shades of character which are found within the precincts of a college. On the contrary, I am induced to touch upon this subject, to prepare my reader's mind for the varied, chequered life, of one whose privilege it once was to partake, with others, of the intellectual repast which there is so liberally provided; to show how many favoured sons of "Alma Mater" are compelled by unfore-

seen circumstances, to endure a life of drudgery, of degradation, which the vast majority of mankind would never dream that it did or could exist; a life which ought to be one of honour, but which in reality is one of servitude; an existence which from its toilsome, tortuous, character has broken the heart of many, who have, as a last resource, been compelled to enter upon it as the only apparent alternative from utter destitution, of hopeless misery!

Nay, start not, my fair reader, when you learn that it is my intention to write the history, depict the sufferings, and to excite your sympathy in behalf of a "*school fag*."

"Oh, the contemptible creature! I have no patience to read any more; I thought it was something more entertaining and instructive. The idea, 'a school assistant!' *his* life, too! Who could sit down to read such a history? What presumption some men have, to be sure!"

Let not these angry feelings mislead you, but rather listen "to the tale which I shall unfold," and when you have waded

through the whole of it, then judge, incensed fair one, whether it be as devoid of interest as you imagined, when first you took up for perusal "The Revelations of School-life," by Cantab.

CHAPTER II.

I HAD now been at College two years—had passed my “little go” with considerable éclat—although I had forgotten most of the good resolutions I had made at the commencement of my residence there. Yet I managed to get on much better than I expected—more than I deserved. I found myself in the “First Class” at our College examinations, and had awarded me several very handsome prizes. I was looked upon by the “Dons” as extremely promising, and my name was familiar to the reading men of the other colleges, as one who would probably stand high at the “B. A.” examination! I must confess

I did not value, as others would have done, the position which my success had gained for me in the College; for I knew I had not worked (not half as much) as many others who were placed below me. Many of these poor fellows, I have seen taking their "Constitutional" with book in hand, devouring its contents, whilst the body was being strengthened by their hasty walk, and yet some of these toiling students were men who would never arrive at the goal for which they panted, and sighed, and endured so much to reach, whilst others, like myself, who were indolent and careless, left these plodding ones behind in the race, with no hope of their ever being able to come near, much less to pass us. Surely, this unequal, mysterious distribution of talent, was enough to make the heart of many a striving, hard-working man, feel its nakedness, almost to deplore its existence, and mourn over its sad reality, its visible, undeniable truths.

Another thing, too, made me dissatisfied with my success. When I joined the University, I became unfortunately connected

with men, whose characters, at the first, it were difficult to discover. They were very gentlemanly, free, and anxious to give me any information upon any subject, either in connexion with the college or the town ; thus, they had a power over my better judgment before I was conscious of the extent of the influence they possessed over me. I found when *almost* too late, that they were "*fast men*," good fellows in their way, but who made it one of their grand points to attack every "Freshman" within their own circle, and by patronizing him, to make him, before he was aware of his exact position, one of themselves ; thus drawing him into a vortex from which it would be nearly impossible to be extricated ; however, I was more fortunate than some, for I managed by degrees to withdraw myself from their society. I had discovered their characters, and felt uneasy whilst I was so intimately connected. My father's wise advice then came to my rescue. It was my "safety valve"—"*Beware of profligate associates !*" appeared to be written in the swollen, bloated

faces of my new associates. Methought I could perceive in their sunken eyes, the impress of some demon's work, which was silently, slowly, though surely bringing them to an early, premature grave. I paused upon this threshold, and found a means for escape. I gazed from this pinnacle of dissipation, and saw before me everything that was dark and desolate. I looked back, and espied, although at a distance, the loveliness of that spot from which I had relapsed. I thought I saw the hand of affection stretched out once again to receive me, as an erring, forgiven child. I paused and embraced the mystic welcome, and ere it was too late, was rescued from that gulf of perdition, into which so many promising flowers have irretrievably been precipitated, without the most remote chance of ever being able, by their own fortitude and resolution, to reach again the surface. It was not so with me, I escaped in time, before the corroding influence of inordinate desires had darkened the vista of conscience, had obscured the glimmer of common sense, or annihilated the remains of early parental advice.

It was these innate thoughts upon my "undeservings," which made me set so little value upon what my abilities had obtained for me. When I contrasted my *almost* neglect of study, with the unremitting toil of the poor student, and saw how little he progressed with all his labour, I felt indignant with myself to find that I was in a position which I did not merit, whilst this plodding man was occupying a station far below his deserts—whilst he had been burning the midnight oil in intense study, I had wasted my time in lavish, thoughtless, indiscreet pleasures.

The period at length arrived when I was to leave for the "long vacation." I had written home apprising them of the pleasing information, and was surprised that I had received no letter in return. My anxiety was considerably increased when I called to my mind, that the last few letters from my sisters were couched in a strain so very different to what they had written on previous occasions. There was a melancholy, mysterious tone pervading them, which I

could not understand. Instead of the girlish simplicity of innocence, there was the sedateness of the thoughtful mind. Instead of the buoyant, sorrowless spirit of Nature's child, there was the serious tone of the *reflective, sober-minded* woman. All this was a mystery to me. I waited the arrival of every post, and still without any letter. Even if any of them had been ill, some one could have written to have calmed my fears—relieved my suspense. As it was now, I could not think or divine why they had not written, and why their last letters were so strangely expressed, so full of the *dreary nothing*, which touched upon all subjects without explaining any—all these reflections and misgivings made me doubly anxious to return to my home.

The *last* morning I spent at college arrived. Although the sun shone with more than his usual splendour, yet I felt low-spirited and restless. I once more (and for the *last time*) hastened to the post-office. "No letter" was the gruff reply. I returned to my rooms, and heavy-hearted, commenced to pack up

my things and books. I remember well that I was seized with a longing desire to linger about the old college on that morning, which I never had experienced before, and even when my "gyp" took my luggage down to the office, I watched him returning to the college, as far as my eyes could see, with a melancholy gloom, which I could not explain, neither could I assign the slightest—most remote reason. Another time I should have treated him with severity, now my heart seemed to yearn after him. I had forgotten all his dishonest, cool acts, and remembered only that he was gradually disappearing from my view. I do not know what it was that possessed my mind, but there appeared some presentiment hanging over it, which made me view with greater interest, objects which, at other times, I should have despised. It was my *last* of a College life.

Upon coming home, I found to my surprise, that neither my father nor mother were there. My sisters tried to look cheerful, yet there was in that attempt an indication

that something was wrong. They told me in their simple, guileless style, that our parents had left on the day preceding my return, that for several days strange-looking persons were at the Hall, that two came the very morning our parents left as though they had come for them. I felt grieved at this mysterious aspect of things, and sat for some time dull and contemplative. In fact, we all were sad. My spirits appeared to have left me, my whole system was chilled, frozen with this very unexpected gloomy reception. My sister Emily saw me dull, and tried to rouse me; but it was in vain, the mind had centred itself upon the future too firmly to be removed by even a fond sister's caresses.

"My dearest Rowland," said the loving sister, with an expression which none perhaps but a brother *can* really see, "don't be so mopish, you make me feel more unhappy than I really am."

"Why, my dear Emily, these are moments for grave thought; tell me, did not mamma give you any reason for leaving so abruptly?"

Emily perhaps saw in my countenance a sorrowful expression of disappointment, and she tried to avoid giving me a direct answer. She made one or two attempts to turn the current of my remarks into some other channel, but in that she failed, and seeing that I was bent upon receiving an answer to my question she said—

“When the two men came, they wanted to see papa only, and that he must go with them. We heard a great noise, and presently mamma came rushing down stairs and said she would go with papa—she looked so pale and so troubled—then she came to me and gave me a kiss and sobbed, and said I was to give her kind love to you and say she was sorry that she was compelled to go with papa, but she hoped soon—very soon—to see you. I am sure she had been crying a great deal, for her eyes were so swollen—poor dear mamma, I was so hurt to see her so unhappy.”

The doting daughter had scarcely finished her simple tale, when we were startled by a loud knock at the outer hall door, and before we could speak, two rough-looking

men appeared, and without the slightest ceremony marched into the room where we were sitting. One of them, more cool than the other, sat down upon one of the couches. We were petrified, and first looked at each other, then at the men, in mute astonishment.

"Sorry to disturb you in this ere sort of a vay, young voman," commenced the cool intruder, addressing the affrighted Emily, "but can't any how help it; duty is duty you knows," looking at me with a most malicious wink and nod, "young man, all the world over," casting a leer about the room, and then a knowing sort of a nod at his companion.

"How dare you intrude upon our privacy and seat yourselves down in this way. Who are you? that you should be so impertinent as—" I was too much excited to utter another word, and gasping for breath I stood gazing at them.

"Now, young man, don't be in a hurry—that won't at all suit my complaint," coolly observed the spokesman. "Hurry no man's cattle, my fine young feller, and then, mayhap

you'll do. Have none of this ere sort of nonsense, I begs on you, if you please. I knows my duty better than you young 'uns can tell me, therefore be quiet and let me alone." Then giving me another horrid leer, he called to his companion, "Here Dodger, look round the place first and see what there is—here, stop a bit, I've got the 'xecution somewhere; oh, here it is; so now, Dodger, I gives you possession of this ere place, and you don't move out on it until you has *my* permission, now, mind you that; so, Dodger, go down into the larder, and see what you can grab, for I've preshus hungry."

"Ah! master, and so beeze I. I'll be back in a jiffy." With this short dialogue, the man of all-work rushed out of the room, and his master resumed his seat upon the sofa, amusing himself by whistling a tune, and keeping time with his foot upon the sofa legs. I felt I know not how. I threw myself down into the old family arm-chair, sickened and exhausted. The thought now struck me that these horrid wretches were

“men of the law,” and had seized my father’s property. I became maddened with these reflections, and looking round the room for some weapon by which I could free the hall from such creatures, I beheld my dear Emily prostrate and insensible. She had swooned, and happily for her, had been unconscious of what was going on around her. I attempted to raise her, but found my excitement had made me almost as powerless as she then was ; my rage and wounded pride had completely exhausted me. However, I again tried, but failed. The man came towards me, and was about to lift Emily from the carpet,

“By Heavens, if you dare touch a hair of her head I will limb you to pieces ! Stand off, and let not your accursed hands touch her !” I almost fell, being so prostrate. The man stood gaping at me, and appeared to enjoy my rage as a capital joke, and giving me a grin, in a swaggering manner, said—

“I see, young man, you are a fine fellow, now ; but there be many *sich* like as you, that have been *very* glad to come to sich

like as we be, for summut to do." With this warning he gave me another nod, and left the room in search of Dodger.

With great difficulty I dragged my poor Emily to a couch, and ringing the bell, had her quickly removed. I sat for some time with a mind almost bordering upon distraction; I durst not ruminate upon the future, the present was so inexplicable. What could all this mean? How was it to end? My father was by no means extravagant, never was over prodigal, and always was supposed to have lived within his means; yet, whence this sudden reverse? It was so mythical that I could not believe my senses; I thought—I was convinced, it could only be, it must, it was—a dream! Maddened with these thoughts I hastened from the Hall, and strolled about the shrubberies and woods of the park until it was late in the evening, when being overcome with fatigue, and exhausted with anxiety, I returned to the Hall.

As I approached this ancient relic of my family name, associated with so many things

that were pleasing, I could not but pause, and gaze at its Gothic structure in mournful silence. In the excited state of my imagination, I fancied that I could see the spirits of those departed relatives, (who, when on earth, had enjoyed so much happiness here,) rushing backwards and forwards before my bewildered eyes in the greatest agony and concern, at what was now about to take place in their once earthly abode of comfort and joy. As I stood thus contemplating, all around seemed desolate ; I fancied the hand of the spoiler, making sad havoc with those things which had been so much prized as family relics. The very windows, too, looked as though they were mourning for some great domestic calamity ; the wind that shook the tall and stately trees, echoed back notes of bitterness and woe ; all was so cheerless, so miserable !

And when I crossed the portal of the Hall door, I encountered the same dismal objects there ; even the old armoury was grim and sad ; there was a dullness of look about them which I had never noticed before.

The old helmets seemed to shake with grief, and with a pallid hue more livid than before, I thought they felt their glory had departed! Methought their heads did shake defiance at the spoiler's intrusion upon that spot, which was hallowed by the heroic deeds of their ancient wearers.

The poor old servants, too! many of whom, from their youth, had lived in the family, and who were now grown grey in service. How can I describe their looks? How impossible to depict their feelings! It was to me a sight I shall never forget. I had scarcely reached the door of the breakfast-room, when I found myself surrounded by these poor faithful creatures, who, with sobs and tears, inquired what had happened? Where was their poor master and mistress? What had become of them? Whither had they gone?

I must confess, that I felt a sympathy for these poor domestics, which completely unnerved me. Their unsophisticated expressions of duty and affection for the family, their trembling, agitated, convulsed words, in inquiring about their master and mistress,

was altogether to me a scene which operated most powerfully upon my mind. I could only tell them what I knew, which was simply nothing; that we must rely upon Providence to clear up this mystery, and trust that all will yet be well.

I retired to my room. Sleep! that solacer of all care, which finds a resting-place within the bosom of the most poverty-stricken creature,—that deigns to visit the humblest cot, and there to take up its abode, was banished from my couch. I sought the aid of the pleasing reminiscences of my college life, but all in vain! The hours passed heavily. The solemn tone of the neighbouring church clock striking the midnight hour, heightened the effect of my gloom, gave an additional colouring to the already overwrought picture, and I became more miserable still.

That night was to me one of death! It sunk my once buoyant spirits into the lowest depths of despondency, and as morning's grey tinged the trees in the park, I found myself the same sleepless being I was before I went to my room.

CHAPTER III.

IN the course of a few days I soon discovered that my worst fears were more than realized. I observed other men of the same dark, suspicious mien, prowling about the premises, who were evidently watching for an opportunity to force an entrance into the house, should those who had possession, by any chance, leave.

It was a mournful change. I thought not of or about myself, my mind was too much occupied concerning my two young, inexperienced sisters. What would become of them? how could they buffet about the wide world, exposed to the scorn of former supposed

warm-hearted friends, subject too, to the sneers of those, who in the time of their prosperity, envied them their position and privileges.

I felt as though everything was snatched from us, that a cloud had burst over us and annihilated all our prospects, blighted all our hopes, dimmed all our joys, deprived us of all our happiness, scattered for ever all the many and various pleasing anticipations of comfort and independence.

Amid all these days of gloom, I saw more than ever the necessity of waiting with patience before I took any decided step for my own future. I would first see the end of this beginning of troubles, satisfy myself with the issue of passing events, and when I knew all, had seen the naked truth, had ascertained the cause of this extraordinary reversion of my parents' affairs, had made some kind of provision for my sisters—had secured something out of the wreck of the estate, *then*, and not till then, would I think of myself!

With these views uppermost in my mind,

I left home early on the following morning, and proceeded to my father's agent, from whom I learnt the many painful particulars of my parents' sudden misfortunes.

I was told that my father's goodness of disposition had involved both himself and family in irretrievable ruin. Being overpersuaded by the cunning worldling, he was induced to join a public company, which promised enormous profits. Ever charmed with the fascination of any speculation, he took an active part in the concern, and was made a "*Director*." He thus became more closely identified with its management, and liable for any debts which might be incurred. Although he had not the most remote idea there was even the possibility of any risk, having been assured *by his friend*, who recommended this prosperous company to his notice, that it was a first-rate thing, that there was a large paid-up capital, that the Directors were all men of substance, "*all honorable men*," that in fact it was the safest and best company which had ever been established!

My father was so blinded by these plausible, specious representations, that he placed the most unbounded confidence in its integrity, and took a still more active and responsible part in its various transactions. He had moreover advanced the company several large sums of money and made himself answerable for many heavy accounts. Things went on for a time (a very short time) in the most satisfactory way, there appeared a large amount of business—especially on those days when my father was at the office—all was then activity, all business, all success.

The "*Bubble*" at length burst, and with it flew my father's money, and his sham colleagues. It was soon discovered that he was the only person who was worth anything. The other Directors being rascally adventurers, men of straw, who lived upon the public by getting up these sham companies, who waited like a lion in his lair, until they saw a victim near, upon whom they could pounce, and upon whose vitals they could feed and fatten. So, even so was it with my single-hearted, unsuspecting parent, he became their

dupe, and his family must suffer the penalty.

Action after action followed in quick succession, everything was in jeopardy, everything seemed to be in danger the most imminent, until at the eleventh hour my father told his lawyer how he had been victimised. There was now no time to be lost, not a day not an hour should elapse, without something being done to save the property or part of it, from those vultures of the law, whose creatures were then prowling about the Hall, ready, and only waiting, for an opportunity to dart upon their prey. However, the solicitor anticipated all this, and upon his own responsibility, and unknown to any one, had sent the men to take a friendly possession before others came, who would be less scrupulous in what they did or how they acted.

These, then, were the men, whose churlish looks and manners so enraged me on their sudden and mysterious appearance at the Hall.

Having ascertained these vague particulars

from my father's agent, I hastened to the office of his confidential adviser. This sublime specimen of an "honest man" shook me most frantically by the hand, whilst at the same time he shook his sympathetic head most mournfully. He politely informed me that he was fearful *all*—*all* was gone! that my father must have been mad to have acted in this extraordinary manner.

"To think, Mr. Roland," said the little man, "that all these transactions of your father should have taken place, without *my* knowledge" (the small lawyer was impressive when he pronounced, with considerable emphasis, the possessive pronoun). "What," he resumed, "what is the use, my dear young friend, of a physician, but to remove the dangerous symptoms of a disease, to prescribe a remedy, to check its ravages and stay its course?" The small man again shook his head, and gazed intently at a very small object at the top of the ceiling. "But," again he spoke, "you are aware that the physician is required to know something of the constitution of his patient, his manner of

living, his general habits, and all these little things, before he can venture to apply the necessary remedial measures ; for how can he administer medicine unless he knows the nature of the disease ? These, my friend, are truisms no one can gainsay, none can doubt ; and so, my dear young friend," placing the tip of the fore-finger of his right hand upon that of his left, and looking very grave, " it is precisely the same with the solicitor, as physician of the pocket, *he* bears the same relation to the state of his client's worldly health, as the physician, on the other hand, does to his bodily health. Their vocations are the same in kind, though different in degree ; but, Sir," says the good man, becoming still more impressive, and putting his large silver-mounted spectacles over his forehead, with several learned shrugs of his shoulders, he closed his eyes, and swayed backwards and forwards upon his toes, which see-saw action, probably in some measure or degree, assisted him in more clearly demonstrating the particular fact which he wished so particularly to impress upon my mind ; " but, Sir," the sage

resumed, "let me ask you how can a doctor know anything about the real state of his patient, unless he be consulted in the earliest stage of the disease?" looking professionally. "How can he venture even to suggest a remedy, unless he is in possession of all the secret, antecedental appearances of the malady; unless, Sir, he knows *all* the minutiae of, and the circumstances attendant upon, the cause of the attack." Here the Lilliputian man of law opened his large grey eyes, and giving an additional shake of his "Blackstonian head," threw himself upon his "Woolsack," and crossing his legs, remained for some time in deep, profound, mysterious thought. Having recovered from this painful state of abstraction, he once more gave vent to his oracular wisdom. "Is it not in strict accordance with common sense, my dear young friend, that your parent should have consulted *me* before he embarked in this hazardous speculation. *I* could have warned him of his danger. *I* could have told him of the exact position of *all* the men who were connected with this scheme. But, no!"

said the excited lawyer in a mournful tone of agony, "But, no! gentlemen will *not do so!* They join themselves to parties, without reflection, and when they are in a *galloping consumption; then* they call in the physician, *then* they can see their imminent peril, but," mournfully delivered the good lawyer, "then it happens, in nine cases out of ten, that it is too late—the doctor's skill avails not—the patient sinks, and all is over!" The lawyer paused, and throwing himself back in his chair he sat for some time motionless. At length he resumed—

"Now, my dear young friend, this is exactly the position of your parent at this moment; I have had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and I thought, confidence," here he shook his head and sighed deeply, "for many years, during which time I have managed his affairs, and knew the exact relationship in which he stood with every one in regard to money matters. What then, my young friend, was my astonishment, to learn from his own lips, at the eleventh hour, too, that he had become

a director of this rascally company, whose debts are enormous, and no one to pay them but your father's property."

"Is he liable for all the debts which have been from time to time contracted," I inquired.

"For every farthing of them, my dear friend,—for every farthing;" the little lawyer wrung his hands in the intensity of his feelings. "If your father had *only* hinted to me that he thought of becoming connected with this company, I should have dissuaded him from having anything to do with it; for it was known that the men who started it were of the most equivocal, nay, questionable characters; the shares had been in the market for months, and no one would buy them. It was a notorious fact, that there was not one single name in the long list of directors which was known by our great money-speculating firms, not a man of substance amongst them. However your father could have been so deluded by such men astonishes me to a degree that I cannot express; I am at a loss to account for so strange a procedure on his part." The

small man again relapsed into his former state of abstraction, and sighed heavily.

“Will *all* the property be sacrificed?” I eagerly inquired, “none saved out of the wreck to support my sisters?”

“I fear *all—all* must go, it is a hard—very hard case,” said the feeling man, somewhat agonized; “I have anticipated the seizures and consequent destruction of the property, by sending two men to the Hall to take a friendly possession, until I can see what is really to be done for the best. It will take me some time to look over all the deeds belonging to your father, and until I have done this, I cannot exactly state the precise position in which he is likely to be placed, whether anything can be saved or not. Your mother’s jointure will be safe as that was settled upon her; fortunate it is so—indeed, most fortunate.” The lawyer again reclined in his chair, and clasped his hands in the most *lively* agony.

“What would you advise me to do in this painful emergency?” I asked.

“You can do nothing,” replied the oracle

of law: "the only thing you *must* do," he looked at me agonizingly, "It is, my dear young friend, a harrowing alternative, but it must be done! You must, with your sisters, (poor, dear, inexperienced young ladies!) *leave the Hall*, directly! Go to some friends and live with them; you must not remain there any longer."

"What are we to do?" I eagerly inquired.

"You can *only*, my dear young friend," smoothly replied the lawyer, "*hope* for the best. I shall at all times be glad to *hear* of your welfare." He evidently wished to terminate the conversation—"I hope things will not be *quite* so bad as we anticipate," rising from his chair, and holding out his hand. "When anything of *importance* occurs I will let you know," shaking me most affectionately by the hand. "*Good morning*, Mr. Roland," opening the door. "*Good morning*, Mr. Roland," and I was gone.

"Hope for the best," echoed on every side, as I wended my way for the last time to Ashley Hall. The pharisaical cunning of the lawyer appeared to haunt me, making his

friendly greetings and advice more contemptible, and his deceit more apparent than before. "*Hope for the best,*" I thought a most *hopeless* guide for an inexperienced youth! "*Hope for the best,*" I thought was strange comfort to a mind unaccustomed to *hope* at all. And stranger still methought was that advice, emanating from a man, who had plucked my parent of what in my extremity I might require!

I hastened to Ashley Hall, being anxious to relieve the minds of my sisters from any further doubt or uncertainty in the matter. The *truth* must be told. The dread alternative must be revealed. They *must leave the Hall!* How could I break this stern command to them! I hesitated—was resolved not to tell them, to risk all consequences, and remain sojourners at the place of our birth, then, it must, it would, at last be known. Better far to do it at once, and let the innocent sisters learn from a brother's lips all their misfortunes, than gather these painful facts, from the actions of the coarse and vile intruder. I will tell them all, conceal

nothing, console, comfort, nay, "*Hope for the best.*"

What was my surprise—astonishment, to find, that they heard my sad tale for their instant removal, with delight! assured me it was what they desiderated—that they could never be happy again at the Hall—that they would go into the wild world, and if stern necessity required it, put their talents to some good account, and *then* they should be happy; *then* they would feel more content; then they would experience less uneasiness—less apprehension.

How ignorant must I have been of woman's nature to have formed all these erroneous views; to have apprehended that my announcement of such a necessity would break their young, susceptible hearts! How shallow, how foggy my vision, in relation to woman's constancy, and her cheerful endurance of disappointments! So true it is that woman can bear the greatest reverses with a calmness, which, from their gentle nature, we could never expect they were able to sustain. Yet, so it is, woman is never truly

great until she is placed in a position of danger or peril; where her strength of character is to be developed—her fortitude to be tested. Then, she shows the genuine stability of *that* mind; the firmness of that love, which has been implanted within her breast to cheer, to comfort man upon his course, when the clouds of adversity hang over his present, threaten his future destiny!

At such times, too, she shows by her energy that hope has not forsaken her—that she knows a *ray*, however faint, will show itself, which will cheer her blighted heart, raise the drooping spirit, calm and refresh the agonised mind, exalt the desponding thoughts!

Man, on the contrary, is soon cast down, prostrate and inert; he loses his confidence, and gives himself up to despair; he does not think that although the *clouds* do obscure the *light*, yet the sun *shines* beyond these clouds as bright, as brilliant as ever!

Alas! man does not know woman's worth, until he has discovered his own weakness. Man is ignorant of woman's love, until he

has lost his own moral courage. Man knows not woman's faithfulness until he has felt himself to be in the most imminent peril! And woman knows not her own real strength, until she has seen man overtaken by adversity, until she has observed his weakness, his powerless, prostrated condition!

Then, and only then, does man estimate a woman's love. Then, and not till then, does a woman know and feel, that man, with all his boasted wisdom, is but a poor, weak creature! That without her arm, without her courage to support, to assuage, and to comfort, man could not perform the various duties devolving upon him, could not perfect the exalted mission which he has to do, whilst a sojourner here below!

Man's strength is often weakness. Woman's weakness often conduces to man's strength!

CHAPTER IV.

THE necessary arrangements were soon made for the removal of my sisters from the Hall. They went to the residence of a maiden annt where they were to stay, until it was known what provision could be made for their future support. I once more returned to London, although, at the time, I had no object in view in going there. Probably I was attracted thither by some involuntary feeling that it was a place where the many changes of faces and the variety of scenes, would, in a measure, make the sorrowing mind forget its misery. I strolled about through various streets and squares.

until I found myself carried away by the great stream of humanity in the direction of the Strand. Beginning to feel somewhat hungry, and seeing a decent-looking "Eating and Chop House," I entered, and was marched up-stairs by a rather short, obsequious waiter. The room was large, and well furnished, the little "snuggeries" were very neat, and, in short, everything seemed replete with cleanliness and comfort. I sat down, until the "man of steam" produced the bill of fare, strongly recommending everything that was therein named. Having made my selection, and requesting him to engage the *Times*, I sat abstractedly for some time, musing over the cheerless prospects that were before me, when I was aroused from my reverie by the sound of laughter from a box at the farther end of the room. This incident induced me to look around and notice the class of people who were therein congregated. They appeared of the better sort of frequenters of these places. I should imagine there was a mixture of lawyers, "briefless barristers," government clerks, and a few stragglers, like myself.

Everything was now quiet—indeed I was struck with the profound silence that pervaded the whole room—nothing could be heard save an occasional call from some impatient gastronome for the waiter, and the clinking noise of the knives and forks.

How great, then, was the consternation of the hungry and impatient, to hear anything in that room which could disturb its wonted serene aspect. The disciples of the “laughing god” little thought how they were disturbing the digestive powers of many a sanguine admirer of Soyer. How they were hazarding the valuable lives of many an apoplectically-disposed member of society. How, in short, they were breaking the rules of this renowned *restaurant*. One of the hungry visitors, a regular sexagenarian, became greatly alarmed,

“Waiter!” bawled out the old gentleman. “Waiter, here. Who are those persons who made such a noise just now at the farther side yonder? A sort of *horse laugh*.” The old man said the last epithet very loud, and looked viciously.

“Why, sir,” said the waiter, who had a salve for every sore,—“why sir, I don’t exactly know, but I believe they be two collegians, that have come up to town for a bit of a lark.” Here the waiter gave a leering look at the box which contained the rebels. “I don’t know howsumever if that is the case, but they have been here now some time, and had lots of wine, and when that’s the case, you know, sir, they will talk rather loud, and—” the remaining words were drowned by another outburst of laughter; and a hearty good-humoured one it was, too. The old gentleman became quite nervous, and ejaculated—

“God bless my soul! waiter, they will so distract my poor head, that I shall not be able to eat my dinner. I think, perhaps, you had better give my compli—No! I think, waiter, you should tell them not to make so much noise.” The dumb waiter only shook his head, but in such a way as plainly told the old gentleman that it would be no easy job to quiet them now. He would much rather have nothing disagreeable to do with

them. They were jolly, and let them be so.

Becoming somewhat impatient for my dinner, I tapped the table with a knife, which soon brought to the recollection of the waiter my wants, who sliding along the floor with his white cloth under his arm, soon came towards me.

“Sorry to have kept you so long without your dinner, sir,” commenced the waiter’s apologetic speech; “but you see, sir, them two in yonder box,” nodding over towards the nervous old gentleman,—“are *regulars*, and they expect every one who comes in here to behave as orderly like as when they be in a church,” giving another leer;—“and therefore you see, sir, they are rather put out of the way at the noise those youngsters there are making; but sir,” says the agreeable man of steam, “you see, sir, these here old uns quite forgets they was once young like these blades, and,” perorated the waiter, looking very knowing,—“I be bound to say, that when them was young, they was gay uns and no mistake.”

The loquacious waiter wished to convince me of this important fact, by putting his hand to his face, and pulling his cheeks and nose, as though he were saying "That the puffed jolly appearance of the one, and the rubicund hue of the other, were evidence sufficiently conclusive to settle *that* question at once."

"Waiter! waiter, here!" called out the nervous old gentleman.

"Comin', sir, in a minit," politely answered the waiter, not at all hurrying himself. At length he left me to discuss the viands which I had ordered, and being rather hungry, I did so with a keenness of appetite that made me do justice to them. I had scarcely finished, when another loud peal of laughter issued from the same box. The hilarity and good-heartedness with which it was accompanied so attracted my attention, that my "optics" became transfixed to the place from whence the laugh proceeded; I continued to gaze and listen to their loud, merry talk, until I felt I could enjoy a laugh, too. There seemed in those cheerful, uproarious voices, a mesmeric power, which

attracted—fixed my mind; the magnetic influence had possessed my feelings, and I felt as though I must know something more of them! That sinking heaviness of heart, which I had experienced for some time, became suddenly converted into the buoyancy and cheerfulness of other days. I became, as by magic, another being, transformed into myself again! was the same thoughtless, light-hearted creature I had once been. I must know something more of these fellows. I even fancied I did know the voice of the most clamorous. Now again, another round of laughter echoes through the room, startling the nervous gentleman, who had fallen into a somniferic state from the effects of his good dinner. The noise gradually subsides, and the nervous old gentleman, having adjusted his spectacles, which had fallen upon the extreme point of his nose, took up the "Times" and commenced once more spelling over the advertisements; scarcely having regained his composure when another peal, more loud and jocund than their predecessors, assailed

the ears of the astonished old man. This was more than he could possibly bear; he hastily rose, and putting his large green cotton umbrella under his arm, and his hands dangling the tails of his coat, he essayed forth, and approached the box which was occupied by these noisy intruders.

The nervous old gentleman stood before them for some time, "taking his observations." When he had completed his survey, he muttered to himself, (though so loud that every one could hear)—

"Eh! can't expect much better behaviour from such jackanapes." The wrathful tone of the speaker added to their mirth, causing them to laugh louder, as though they were ignorant of the *visible* fact of there being any one near; of course, they did not see or hear their visitor. The old gentleman stood, or rather was shaking with excitement; seeing no indication of any good resulting from what he had so loudly whispered, he was about to commence a second remark, when the spokesman of the two discerned his august presence.

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"Well, old fellow!" was the ungracious address of the young man; "what do *you* want, pray? Oh! Ned," (addressing his companion in an under tone) "he's the waiter! Well, old boy, what's the shot?"

"What do you mean, sir," stormed out the old gentleman, furiously, shaking his head and the tail of his coat; "what do you mean? do you take me for a waiter, sir?" the nervous old gentleman was getting still warmer,— "does my appearance look like *that*, sir? I am a respectable man, and, sir, I am not to be insulted in this way, by such an impertinent—" He was most irate, and foaming at the mouth with rage, and with his large green cotton umbrella, was about to inflict summary chastisement upon the head or other parts of the person of his tormentor, who, not fancying at *that* particular moment a salutation of *that* peculiar kind, gently interrupted him—

"There, there!" hiccupped the teasing opponent. "Stop now, governor, you'll get too warm, and besides damaging my head, for which you would have to pay, you will

certainly damage that remarkably good-looking and valuable umbrella, which perhaps, when it was new, might have cost *half-a-crown*, eh! Ned, what do you say?" addressing his companion, and looking very sly at his new friend. "Come, you look a jolly old chap, take a seat and join us, we shall be proud of your company." The nervous old gentleman was still more indignant at this familiarity, and was about to give vent to his ire, when the spokesman with an awful leer coolly remarked—

"What's the article you wish to recommend? are you in the '*oil and colour line*?' addressing his friend and laughing heartily. "I should say, certainly, you carry about with you, old boy, *plenty of fat*, and an uncommon lot of good port *colouring*. I declare, Ned, he is a walking advertisement of his trade; he looks well, doesn't he? Here, your health, governor, and may you never want a friend, nor a bottle to give him," and with a wink at his companion and an obsequious bow to the nervous old gentleman, he drank to the sentiment. The old gentleman looked as-

tonished ; his rage was too intense to allow him to speak, he rolled backwards and forwards like a huge machine, without having any power over its own volition ; he groaned with vexation, and saw nothing to console him, save the *sang froid* manners of his tormentor.

“ Will you do us the honour of joining us, sir,” resumed the stranger. “ Here, waiter, another glass for this gentleman ; pray be seated, sir,” rising from his seat with much gravity, and looking at his friend ; “ pray make yourself at home, sir, let business go to the dogs, as our immortal bard says of physic. Now, my good sir, make that good-humoured face of thine, assume its wonted cheerfulness,” leering at his young companion. “ Your health, sir ; Ned, drink the old gentleman’s health in a regular bumper.” The young men exchanged winks at the expense of their *quasi* friend, and it was evident they had immense difficulty in restraining themselves from giving another uproarious laugh.

The nervous old gentleman was sensible

that he was in a "regular fix"—that this extraordinary episode had attracted every one's attention in the room. The old gentleman was, evidently, one of those peculiar fussy creatures, who must always interfere with everybody's business, and have something to do with every occurrence. There were many in that room who heartily rejoiced at the "lesson" he had received from these strangers. Many knew his eccentric character, and were relishing the joke that was being practised upon him.

The waiter, too, enjoyed the scene vastly. He was to be seen peeping over the shoulders or the heads of the by-standers, holding his sides for very joy—ever and anon giving a loud kind of cough, and then running off to another part of the room. Then he would return again, and repeat the same agreeable trick; only he would give a louder cough, and make greater haste to the other side of the room, to attend to the wants of some imaginary hungry customer.

The nervous old gentleman saw the nature

of the predicament into which he had so untowardly fallen, and he now thought the wisest as well as the best plan for him to pursue, was to get out of it as well as and in the best manner he could. Thus, making a virtue of necessity, he looked around him, and gave various nods of recognition to his friends, shaking his head with as much solemnity as though he were pronouncing a funeral oration over some valued friend.

He tried, in his extremity, to look grave; and for this purpose, he drew his large spectacles over his small eyes, and raising his hands, he stood for some time viewing, with profound contemplation, his youthful tormentor. His general aspect was so exquisitely grotesque—the sublime and the ridiculous were so inartistically blended in his contortions of mind and body, that it was impossible for the spectators to witness the scene, without being most amusingly entertained. All were upon the titter—some laughing outright; amongst the foremost of the latter was the old waiter again, whose hoarse voice and stifled chuckling cough

were heard above the rest. He had not relished a scene so much for many a long day. He skipped about the room with the youthful vigour of a young lamb, upon a fine and bracing vernal morn. One moment he was exploding with a loud roar by the side of the "old regular;" the next, he was at the other extremity of the room, paying the most polite attention to some solitary customer. Again he was in the midst of the exciting scene—again his cough was troublesome—anon, he was at the other end of the saloon. It was an event that he would never forget. It was an epoch from whose data he would count many subsequent events. The old waiter had not felt for years so happy.

The nervous old gentleman, finding at last that the tables were turned against him, and that every one present looked upon it as a capital joke, relaxed the sternness of his feelings, and *laughed too*. Let not the austere judge of human nature condemn the nervous old gentleman for this whimsical perversion; but rather view it as another of the melan-

choly proofs which have been handed down to us from time immemorial, of man's insufficiency of will to govern his actions—of his inability, at all times, to *act* in accordance with the convictions of his own unbiassed judgments ;—of the apparent impossibility which prevents him from *doing* what he would ;—of the liability to which we are all exposed, of *performing* many things diametrically at variance with the antecedents of our character and disposition.

The nervous old gentleman at length began to recollect that “time and tide wait for no man,” and pulling from his capacious watch-pocket an enormous “repeater,” and looking at it for some seconds in mute astonishment, ejaculated—

“God bless my soul, gentlemen !” looking around at his friends, with an immense effort to smile ; “how time flies ! I shall not be in time for the post.” Then, turning towards the “young tease,” with a rigid severity of manner and tone, he addressed him.

“I think, young man, your conduct in a public room like this, to a respectable man

like myself,"—the tone was freezing, the action solemn, the gesticulation significant—"is, to say the least of it—the mildest expression that I can apply—most disgraceful." Here was another cold, freezing, chilliness of look, that made even the old waiter fancy he was either in a cold bath upon a December morn, or at the top of some mountain range; he pulled up his coat collar, and shrugged his shoulders as though he were then in an ice house. "But," resumed the nervous old gentleman, with killing solemnity, "I pity you!"—here his lip curled, the "Sardonic smile" was never so naturally illustrated, his dignified look was overpoweringly touching. "Let me," he continued, "give you a word of advice; I see you are young men, in the hey-day of life, therefore *I* can excuse you; yet be careful not to repeat this sort of conduct elsewhere, for you may find others less disposed to bear with it."

"Bravo! bravo! That's what I call uncommonly good—quite cheeseey, Ned! You are a jolly old chap! I am only sorry you are going," roared out his plaguing friend.

The nervous old gentleman now replaced his watch, with much care, in its hiding-place; and taking up his hat, and placing the large green cotton umbrella under his arm, he made a polite bow to his friends, and "casting a last, long (fond) look" at his youthful antagonist, left the room.

There was a universal buzz of stifled mirth upon his departure. Our young entertainer became a kind of hero—all looked towards him with pleasure—many were delighted that he had "put the old fellow down."

Amongst the amused gazers was myself; I had altogether forgotten my own cares, and gradually approaching the box in which the young men were luxuriating, judge of my amazement to find this noisy stranger jumping from his seat, and giving me a most uncereemonious slap upon the back, vociferating,

"What! Mason, my fine fellow, is it you? Who would have thought to see you in a shop like this? Come, be seated. Here, waiter, (where the deuce has he put his small body?)—Here, this way, old Slow-

Coach ; bring me another bottle of the same old Port, and some fresh glasses."

Not only did the old waiter stare at this sudden change in the appearance of things, but the assembled group also looked at each other with credulous astonishment. Seeing we were friends, they soon left us to ourselves ; the Port and glasses were quickly upon the table, and our conversation became general in its nature, although peculiarly interesting in its details.

CHAPTER V.

OUR loquacious friend was no other than one of my old College chums, whom I had lost sight of for some time. When at College he was always the same noisy, good-tempered fellow—ever fond of a joke, and never refused to be one of a party who were “game” for an innocent, quiet row. I don’t believe there was a man at the University who was not at all times glad to see Ralph Thornton (for such was his patronymic name). Even the most quiet, steady, reading men were pleased with him; he had always something droll or dry to say, some little anecdote to tell. They could not resist

laughing at some outbreak of nonsense—outburst of fun—which would do their overloaded brains more good than an hour's "constitutional" within the air-tight enclosures of the quadrangle of their College. Ralph Thornton was a favourite with every one. The "dons" would smile at him; the "small men" patronize—court—bore him! He was always, in some way or other, connected with all the "rows" and "sprees;" yet such was his successful, peculiar way of getting out of any difficulty, that he generally would make it appear that what he had done was either purely accidental, or the consequence of some excusable, untoward casualty.

Amongst the many infirmities of Thornton's nature, it must be confessed that his "love of bed" was not the least conspicuous. It was hinted rather broadly by some of the gossips of his College, that Thornton had been summoned before the "Dean," and had been admonished—gently advised by the Dean to come to morning chapel a little more decent in regard to the arrangement of his apparel; for it was notorious that Thornton would lie

in bed to the very last moment; and although his "gyp" would tell him a dozen times that the chapel-bell was ringing, yet Thornton would not move from his nest, until he was compelled to "turn out," as he quaintly styled it. Then, not having time to dress, he would rush into chapel in the greatest disorder. The "eagle-eyed Dean" had observed this on several occasions, and it was supposed had cautioned him upon the subject.

The most serious joke that Thornton ever perpetrated at his College, was the positive fact that he proposed to go to chapel some morning "*minus*" *his trousers*! His chums took it as a joke; but Thornton assured them that he would do so, if any one would make a trifling wager upon the "probability." The wager was made, and Thornton undertook to perform the dangerous experiment. There were very few who were let into the secret. The appointed morning having arrived, Thornton bustled into chapel with his gown loosely around him, and without the slightest hesitation, took his usual seat.

He would have succeeded admirably without detection, if the affair had rested entirely with himself; but his friends kept staring at him to such a degree, that the Dean observing it, desired Thornton to go to him at the end of the service. Thornton was now in a "regular fix," he had been sacrificed, like many other renowned heroes, to the folly of his friends. However, he still thought he should get out of this disagreeable dilemma, and putting a bold face upon it, he kept his seat until all had left the chapel except the "dons." Thornton now rose, and with a demure expression approached the Dean.

"I have noticed, Mr. Thornton, that you come into chapel *generally* very late, and at *all times* most slovenly." The "dons" eyed the culprit, who, from some peculiarity of the moment, was *almost bent double*. "I have before called your attention to this fact, Mr. Thornton, which, I am sorry to say, has not had the desired effect; not only, Mr. Thornton, do you break the decorous order of this sanctuary yourself, but you cause others to do the same. I observed several gentlemen

at this morning's chapel, attracted by your eccentric (to use no stronger expression) habits, were most irreverent in their behaviour. I hope, Mr. Thornton, this will not occur again, or I shall be compelled to take more serious notice of it." The Dean and Tutors again glanced at Thornton, who stood, or rather was bending with the most profound submission, and paying the most devout attention to all that the Dean had been saying. They were leaving chapel, when one of the Tutors, who was somewhat more practically acquainted with the tricks of "undergrads," observed, or fancied he did *not observe*, any semblance or indication of the "nether garments" of Thornton.

Having gently hinted his suspicions to the Dean, Thornton was called back, and closely questioned upon the absence of those necessary portions of his outer dress. Thornton, perceiving he could not legitimately escape, assumed a peculiar look of surprise.

"It is purely accidental, Mr. Dean," sagely commenced Thornton; "a desire of being at chapel, and a total forgetfulness of

the necessary preparations required for my appearance there, has involved me in this rather awkward predicament, Mr. Dean." The comical countenance of Thornton heightened the ludicrousity of the scene. The Dean was almost smiling! The seniors bit their lips to preserve their gravity, and the junior tutor could not avoid laughing! Indeed, it was afterwards rumoured that this junior was aware of the whole affair, and probably had he not been a tutor, would have enjoyed the joke. However, the thing could not be passed over without a severe penalty. Thornton, before the evening closed, was no longer connected with his College, and from that period I had never seen him, and was ignorant of his *whereabouts*, or what he had been doing, until we were brought into contact in the strange way I have described.

Not wishing to justify Thornton's silly conduct in this particular case, yet it is well known to every member of a University, that tricks of a worse kind are often practised by men whose supposed good character prevents their being suspected capable of per-

forming anything of the sort. Hundreds of tricks are done which are never discovered. The sanctimonious cunning of some, and the subtle craftiness of others, prevent their detection. Thus they retain their "status" amongst the "*Sims*" and other "godly men," passing through their College career without an apparent stain upon their fair name; whilst men like Thornton, more honest and less crafty, who practise similar tricks, are discovered, and in all probability, their prospects in life become blighted and destroyed in consequence!—punished, not perhaps, for the offence, but, according to the old Spartan law, for not being sufficiently skilful in using means for its accomplishment.

Thornton, with all his giddiness of character, was an honest fellow. He was thoughtless and good-hearted; and would rather take upon himself the responsibility of a row, than compromise a friend. I don't say he was free from guile; but he was "more sinned against than sinning." What he did was performed openly. What he thought of doing—wished to be done, he was never

♦

afraid of doing himself. He was full of candour—open to flattery—easily gulled—and very often victimized.

Being somewhat curious to know what he had been doing since we last parted, I was easily prevailed upon to accompany him to his lodgings.

“My dear Mason, I have been to-day to a ‘grinder’s agent,’” remarked Thornton, after we had comfortably disposed ourselves in his rooms.”

“What’s that?” I innocently inquired.

“A ‘grinder’s agent,’ my dear fellow, is a useful sort of person in his way,” replied Thornton, with a disdainful curl of the upper lip. “He is a necessary evil—like many other things which we endure for the sake of some prospective benefit;”—musing for a few moments. “I have availed myself of this man’s assistance, and he has given me a capital berth.”

“I don’t exactly understand you, Thornton,” I replied; “what places does he get you?”

“Why, my dear Mason, this man is employed by the ‘schoolmasters’ to procure for

them assistants, or what are called 'ushers.' Thornton still sat musing. There was a contemptible sneer upon his face as he proceeded, "If you are ever hard up, as I have been, Mason, and don't know where to look for a crust, or a night's lodging, then go to one of this class, and state what you want, and he will soon find something to suit you."

"But, my dear Thornton, I have no qualification; and less experience."

"All the better, my fine fellow—they want you to have neither; the less you know, the better chance you have of having a capital place given you." Thornton sat for some time looking intently at the fire; and, then, as though something had vexed him, he seized the poker, and commenced an attack upon the blazing embers. "These agents, Mason, are an exclusive set. You can rarely get any place, only through their introduction. They will pretend to be very particular about the qualifications or moral character of an applicant, but in reality, they care naught about either;—all that they want is, a man to apply to them, and they will very soon give him a situation."

"I cannot really understand your meaning, my dear friend," I remarked.

"It is as clear as moonlight, Mason. These agents charge every poor fellow whom they recommend to a situation, five per cent. upon their *yearly* stipend, so that, in fact, if you are not qualified and stay only a month, they will get their fee, not on the month, but upon the yearly salary."

"Thank you, Thornton, for this explanation, I see now clearly enough what you mean, yet how can they get their fee for only a month's positive work. It would absorb *all* that was due."

"They are very accommodating, my dear fellow. They know how to humbug you, as well as the principals!" Thornton again resumed poking the fire, but he appeared to be more in earnest and more vicious, as though he were in close contact with some unlucky person's pericranium. "These agents are as cunning as they are exclusive; for instance, suppose you want a berth, and apply to one of them, he will, blandly enough, tell you he has upon his books several places

which will exactly suit you. He will, for the sake of form, take down your qualifications, and occasionally, when he wishes to make a profound impression upon the weakness of his *new* applicant, he will examine him, but of course, all this is a perfect farce,—complete humbug.” Thornton bit his lips, and ground his teeth closer together. “Having in this way worked upon your feelings, he will probably inform you that he should be happy to offer you a situation in such or such a county or town, with “board and lodging,” (as it is graphically styled) and a commencing salary of 30 Gs. per annum; we will further suppose, that you accept it, the agent knows you will not suit,—that you will not stay beyond a month, therefore before he gives you his letter of introduction to the principal of the school, he politely hints to you that he would be most happy to receive from you the sum of £1 16s. 6d., being £1 11s. 6d. as his fee, and 5s. for registration—that is, for conferring upon you the honour of entering your name in his ledger.”

"Suppose a man has not the money to pay him at the time, how does he then proceed?" I inquired, growing somewhat more interested in the information Thornton was conveying to my mind.

"He makes no difficulty about the matter. If you cannot pay in meal you must in malt. They are those peculiar kind of vultures which never quarrel with their food." Thornton's visage was greatly elongated. The long cooped-up smile of contempt lighted up his whole face, making him appear like a monster of revenge. He continued, "They will tell you, kindly enough expressed, that if it be not *convenient* for you to pay them immediately, they would be glad to take your order upon the Principal for the amount." Thornton shrugged his shoulders, and hastily rose from his seat, and looking out of the window, commenced whistling a strange medley of a tune.

"Surely, Thornton, that is rather kind than otherwise."

"Not at all, Mason. It is the ruin of every man who happens to be so unfortunate

as to be poor," replied Thornton, turning from the window; "for these agents don't care a straw about any man's interest or comforts, or anything else. All that they look after is their *money*." Thornton made an effort to look calm, but the restless agitation in which his whole system appeared, made it impossible for him to conceal the perturbation of his feelings.

"It seems natural, Thornton," I mildly remarked; "if a man gets another a situation, he ought, in some way, to be remunerated for his trouble."

"Yes, yes—there's no one finds fault with that," bitterly interrupted Thornton. "It is the nasty, dirty way these agents set about getting it, which makes it so contemptible."

"How do they proceed, then?"

"I will suppose the case of a poor fellow, who has not a penny or a friend in the world," replied Thornton, with a look of sorrowful indignation; "although, Mason, I need not assume a case, for there are many who walk the streets from morning to night, who are in this unfortunate predicament.

Well, such an one is very glad to get a place of any sort. He goes to one of these agents, who gives him one, and he hands to the agent the order upon the Principal. The agent wishes him a kindly farewell—hopes he will like his situation, and find everything comfortable. He starts for his Elysium. He has not been there a week, before this order is sent down to the Principal, with a request, that the amount may be deducted from the *first* quarter's salary !”

Thornton's excitement was painfully intense. The muscles of his face were violently contracted, and he was at that moment mad with the indignant recollection of this “crimping system.”

“It really does seem hard upon these poor men, Thornton,” I remarked.

“Don't you see, Mason,” rejoined Thornton, somewhat less agitated, “how injuriously it operates against this poor fellow. The Principal from that moment looks upon him with distrust—taking every occasion to find fault with everything that is done—Making the position of his new master mise-

nable—treats him with contempt, and the result is, that he gives the poor fellow his *congé* at the end of the month. Again being thrown upon the town, the poor Assistant is desolate, gladly applies to one of these agents, who recommends him to another place, in which, perhaps, he stays another month. Thus he goes on, year after year, plucked and plucked by these agents.”

“It does, indeed, appear a shameful practice, Thornton,” I remarked. “Cannot these poor men help themselves in any way?”

“My dear Mason, it is vain for you or any other man to attempt to do anything which can benefit these poor fellows. What class of men are so helpless as the *Intellectual*, without their peculiar employment? They are not capable of turning their hands to the various crafts which afford other ‘destitutes’ a welcome asylum. They cannot do the work which other men do, when they are unemployed in their regular trade. No! Mason—of all men, the most utterly incapable of getting a living by any means save

the one which they have pursued, are 'The Intellectual'—'The Well Educated!'"

"Do you mean to say, Thornton, that these agents get their fee on the yearly income out of a MONTH's salary?" I inquired, not exactly comprehending Thornton's meaning, and wishing to draw him back to this subject.

"I can tell you this much, Mason, if you did not pay them their demands, they would not only not recommend you again, but would try and damage your character and reputation in some dirty, underhanded way or other."

"I cannot think how men can be so foolish as to go to such unprincipled persons."

"Mason! my dear fellow! what's the proverb? 'Necessitas non legem habet.' Remember that, and you'll then make plenty of excuses for men, who, like myself, employ these agents." Thornton's face was flushed with the crimson hue of shame and humiliation. "You may be sure that it is not from love or respect that induces men to go to them." His frame shook with the

tortuosity of his feelings. "It is from necessity, hard and cursed—beggary, bordering on starvation, which makes almost hell itself seem an agreeable relief." He shook with agony. "Ah! Mason, my dear fellow, since I have been '*roughing it*' for the last year or two, I have run against men and witnessed scenes which beggar all powers of description." His body appeared to coil up in the most writhing paroxysm. "I could tell you, too, Mason, some most harrowing tales of these unfortunate intellectual slaves. Death, to many, would surely be a pleasing alternative—poor fellows!"

Thornton sat for some moments unable to say any more. I did not, at the first, attempt to rouse him; but seeing he was more calm, I ventured to remark:

"It would deeply interest me, Thornton, to hear some of their adventures."

"No—no, Mason! I will not outrage your feelings so much; neither do I hope that either you or I shall ever be doomed to suffer one twentieth part of the misery, which many of these men are daily enduring."

Thornton was again becoming more excited.

"Some other time, Thornton, we will talk over these matters," I observed, not wishing to increase his mental agony.

"Mason! what are your movements for the night?" he inquired. "If you like to stay with me, and you have any inclination to witness a sight—to see *poor fallen humanity!* you cannot do better than sleep here, and accompany me on the morrow to the office of this Immaculate Grinder's Agent."

During the night, I made known to him my exact position. He advised me to take a situation in a school, if only for a time; assuring me "that it was truly a school, not only for those that were taught, but for those who teach."

Consenting to Thornton's proposition, we arranged before we parted for the night, that we should, on the following day, proceed to the office of the "Renowned Grinder's Agent."

CHAPTER VI.

ON our way to the office of the Intellectual Nestor, we had frequent opportunities of noticing the various characters which passed us. Thornton suddenly grasped my arm and paused.

“Do you see that omnibus, Mason? That one yonder, painted blue?”

“There are so many,” I remarked carelessly.

“*That one*,” eagerly interrupted Thornton, “It has now stopped.”

“I observe it now, Thornton.”

“Do you see also *the conductor*? Mark him well, Mason.” Thornton held tightly by my

arm—faintly he continued, “*That* conductor, Mason, was an assistant in the last school where I was classical master”—Thornton exclaimed mournfully—“To what a bankrupt state must intellect be reduced, when one of her followers is gaining his daily bread by occupation so ungenial to an educated mind !”

“Who was the young man, Thornton ?” I inquired, as we were pushing through the vast crowd, “your companion at the dining rooms ?”

“Ah, Mason ! he is a nice fellow, but one of the ‘unfortunates.’” Thornton felt what he said. “He is not more than 20, yet he has been to a dozen schools !” “Buffeted about from pillar to post.” I knew him well when a boy. His father was a Colonel in the army, but dying suddenly, he left his wife, with a large family, totally unprovided for. This was the youngest son, and, poor fellow, for the last two years he has been an assistant grinder.”

“He does not look strong,” I ventured to remark, “nor at all fit for work of any kind.”

"You are right, Mason, he is not strong. The last two years of wrong and mental wear and tear have made him as helpless as a child." Thornton's heart was good. "The last berth he held has completely finished him. The Principal of the school was as ignorant as he was coarse and abusive, and poor Baker was obliged to leave. Since then I have done what I could for him." Thornton was always the friend of the friendless. "I am not able just now, Mason, to assist any one a great deal, but what I have my friends are always welcome to share with me."

"Where did he go? I missed him quite suddenly."

"Why, poor fellow, when he found you and I were old college friends, he did not like to be with us longer than he could help; so he slipped off as soon as we came out of the dining-rooms."

"Where would he go?" I eagerly inquired.

"That's all right, Mason," replied Thornton, "he is provided with lodgings, and everything he wants. He is a grateful, modest young fellow." Thornton sighed. "I wish it

was in my power to do more for him." Thornton was in earnest in what he said. "He has been shamefully treated by these agents."

"Poor fellow!" I mentally ejaculated, "so young and sickly too. Has he been a victim?"

"Ah! Mason, a victim, indeed! not of gammon, as some one says, but of hard, impervious necessity. During the first year of his noviciate he held no less than eight situations—sent here, and sent there, as suited the whim of the agent." Thornton seemed tired of the subject. "You shall some day, Mason, hear from him his adventures as a 'School Fag.' It will amuse you. It is well calculated to instruct the uninitiated."

We had now walked a considerable distance, and I was becoming fatigued, when, suddenly, Thornton turned out of the great stream of life into rather a wide street; and then at right angles into another, until he stopped at the portal of what appeared spacious chambers. We entered, and as we were ascending the circular stone staircase, Thornton whispered to me, "This is the

grinder's agent's sanctum." We had now arrived at a door with a neat little brass knocker, which Thornton used rather roughly.

"Come in," called out from within, in a rather shrill voice, whereupon in we went.

"Good morning, Mr. Silvertongue," said Thornton.

"Oh, good morning, Mr. Thornton," replied the agent, looking down upon some papers, and pulling them about, "I am ra-a-ther engaged just now, Mr. Thornton, with this gentleman" (bowing towards a little puffing old man, who was sitting by the fire), "if you will step into the *next* room, Mr. Thornton, I will speak to you." The agent looked displeased at our intrusion.

"It's of no particular consequence, Mr. Silvertongue," rejoined Thornton, "since you are engaged so *particularly*, I will call again."

"Thank'ee," laconically squeezed out the agent, with his head bent over his papers. "Good morning, Mr. Thornton," he added, advancing towards the door, to *bow* us out."

"I only wanted to *pay* you, Mr. Silver—"

said Thornton, as we neared the door. The name of payment was the talisman which brightened up the hard, money-getting features of the agent.

"Thank'ee, Mr. Thornton," interrupted the agent, with a gracious smile; "will you take a seat," politely handing a chair; "I will attend to you, Mr. Thornton," whereupon he opened a most ponderous-looking ledger, running his finger down the pages with considerable dexterity.

"You will find this a most excellent situation, Mr. Thornton," remarked Mr. Silvertongue, in the most oily, patronizing manner, "and *very* comfortable. I know the gentleman *very* well, Mr. Thornton," taking his pen to calculate the *l. s. d.* connection, "he is a *very* nice man, Mr. Thornton, and treats his masters *very* liberally." The crafty agent had now finished his calculation. His peculiar adverbial way of emphasising his sentences was at all times most prominent. Never more so than when he was receiving the hard-earned cash from his needy applicants, or when he was recommending the

non-existing advantages of some miserable situation to an inexperienced, unsuspecting novice.

"I feel indebted to you, Mr. Silvertongue," observed Thornton, as he was taking from his purse some money, "for giving me the preference. I think you told me yesterday that there were several men who would have liked the post."

"Ye-s, why, y-e-s, Mr. Thornton," replied the agent, in a slow, soft manner, his small eyes glaring at the money which Thornton had loosely in his hand, "several; it is one of the best appointments that I have on my books," concluded the agent, still eyeing the dexter hand containing the money.

"What am I indebted to you, Mr. Silvertongue, for the introduction?" inquired Thornton.

The agent again looked down the long columns of his ledger, and scratching his head with his right hand, said with smooth-tongued modesty—

"Let me see, Mr. Thornton—100 guineas—that will be £5 5s. if you please, Mr.

Thornton," Thornton handed him the money, "and five shillings for registering, Mr. Thornton, if you please."

"Thank 'ee, Mr. Thornton ; good morning, Mr. Thornton ; I am *rayther* engaged now, Mr. Thornton, I am much obliged to you." The agent moved towards the door to show us out. He had got *all* he could for the present, at least, out of Thornton, and hence he could not afford to waste any more of his valuable time, upon such (now) unprofitable visitors. The agent's impatience for our departure after he had secured the money, precluded Thornton from saying anything to him in reference to my peculiar wants ; so that we had reached the door before Thornton could do so. When Mr. Silvertongue had opened the door, Thornton observed in a very indifferent, careless sort of way—

"I am sorry, Mr. Silvertongue, that I have detained you so long from your business with that gentleman."

"Thank 'ee, Mr. Thornton, I am much obliged ; good morning, Mr. Thornton," interrupted the agent.

"This gentleman," Thornton remarked, looking at me, "an old college friend, would have been glad to have had a little conversation with you," holding out his hand to shake his adieu with the agent. "He wants a situation; but as you are now so much engaged, we will, perhaps, call again."

"Will you walk in, Mr. Thornton. Pray take a seat, sir," handing me a chair; "I will attend to you at once."

"But let us not interrupt," said Thornton, pointing to the little old gentleman who sat by the fire.

"Thank'ee, Mr. Thornton, I am much obliged," replied the agent, whose body, soul, and thoughts, were wrapped in the one sole object of his existence, "Business." Money-getting was his thoughts by day, and dreams by night—grinding—skin-flint was his nature, and "Gold—gold—gold," was his deity. Whatever would add to his horde was ever welcomed—whatever could contribute to his idol, gild his costly pill, was sure to meet with a bland, pandering reception.

"What name, sir?" inquired the agent,

opening the ledger, and taking his place at his table.

“Mason.”

“Christian name?”

“Roland.”

“What experience, sir?” inquired the agent, fixing his cunning little eyes upon me.

“None,” I boldly replied; “I have never been engaged in anything of the kind.

“Never mind *that*, sir,” with an assuring tone and look, replied the agent. “What would you undertake to teach sir?” inquired the agent, with the most winning smile; “or rather, I should say, sir, what are your qualifications?”

“The fact is,” I still boldly replied, “I am so utterly inexperienced in these matters, that I don’t know what to say I can do.”

“Well, well, we will see,” replied the agent, with the most bewitching attempt to look agreeable; “there will be not much difficulty in the affair,” looking down his ledger. “I suppose in classics you have read most of the authors.”

“Oh, yes!”

“What in Greek?”

“Most of the plays, with Demosthenes and Homer.”

“Very good,” writing down these various items, said the agent.

“What Latin?” he again inquired.

“Cicero, Livy, Tacitus, Virgil, Terence, Juvenal, and some others,” I carelessly remarked.

“Very good,” with a gracious smile, remarked the accommodating agent, writing down these heads of subjects.

“Now sir, what in mathematics?”

“Euclid, Algebra, Trigonometry, and Conic Sections.”

“Have you read Newton’s”—the agent began to cough; whether he had forgotten the name of the work or not, was a question somewhat involved in doubt. I assisted him—

“Principia? oh, yes! and the Differential Calculus.”

“Very good, Mr. Mason,” responded Mr. Silvertongue, glancing down his ledger. “Where do you reside sir?” Then musing for some time, he at length said—

“I should be glad to see you to-morrow, Mr. Mason, if you’ll just look in. I think I’ve got something that will *exactly suit you*, Mr. Mason.” The agent again approached the door, opening it—“Good morning, gentlemen—Thank yee—I am much obliged—Good morning.” We heard the echo of his parting salutation at the bottom of the stairs! There seemed to be so much designing craft in all he said, that the very banisters leading to his rooms took up his words, and in indignant rage, vibrated them upon the ears of those who might be deluded into the belief that he was an honest, upright man!

Thornton seized my arm, and in one of his excitable ebullitions, indignantly asked—

“Did you ever see a greater humbug?”

And in a look, still more severe, because he knew his views of the man were just, he glanced at the portal, and with hurried steps we hastened away.

“How sickening is that man’s cant, Mason,” remarked Thornton, as we seated ourselves in his room. “To think that we are compelled to employ, and glad to accept appoint-

ments from such cringing, fawning creatures ! It is a moral curse, an intellectual degradation."

"Surely he is a Scotchman, Thornton !"

"Undoubtedly—could you not perceive that from his hungry, grasping appetite after the money," remarked Thornton in disgust. "I have been told, Mason, that this very agent makes from £800 to £1,000 a year, in this way. Every farthing of which comes out of the pockets of such poor fellows as we are." Thornton was getting excited, "I feel disgusted with myself for having anything to do with any of the fraternity." Thornton mused a little. "Far happier in mind are those honest sons of toil, who live in peaceful quiet upon their humble fare. Their sleep is sweet, because their minds are not agitated with the bitter thought, the anticipated dread, of some vulgar outburst of malignant spleen, or personal pique. They work hard and enjoy the fruit of their labour, whilst we poor intellectual slaves, toil from early morn to late at night, and can find neither rest nor quiet, neither can we give satisfaction. We

are hunted and hounded from place to place, the sport and ridicule of some, the profit and amusement of others. Give me the means of becoming an useful mechanic, and I would infinitely rather wear the coarse badge of honest industry, than be clothed in the garb of gentility, which laughs at my presumption. Mason, I am tired of so much false garnishing—would that there was more sincerity, and less want of honesty in man's intercourse with his fellow-man. Then we should see greater respect paid to talent; then the despised intellectual agriculturist would have assigned him his proper place; then he would not think his office a degradation and a curse.

“Thornton, you are too sensitive on these points,” I observed, seeing he was greatly excited.

“True; no one has had greater cause. Here I have paid this agent his fee upon my *yearly* salary. I go there, and the probability is, that all which he has told me about its comforts and advantages, are false. I find the place too disagreeable for me to stay

longer than a month, perhaps even less; I leave—am again in the labour market—again plucked by these agents—again have to encounter fresh faces, learn fresh systems, and submit to fresh insults.” Thornton could scarcely restrain his excitement.

“Mason, it galls me to the quick; I cannot much longer stand this kind of artificial, deceptive state of existence.”

“The system, doubtless, is bad, Thornton,” I remarked; “I wonder parents are not more particular in ascertaining the general characters and attainments of the parties who are to instruct their children, previous to their sending them to school.”

“My dear Mason,” impatiently replied Thornton, “it is no use for you or any one else to moralize on this subject. We know Education has been sadly neglected in this country (and this Agency system is one of the abuses which has crept into it). Until within the last few years, where could you find a more ignorant, illiterate class of men, than our old stock of schoolmasters?”

“That’s all very true, Thornton, and much

to be regretted ; although I don't think the men are to be blamed so much as the government of our country, which permits these great abuses to exist, without doing something to remove them."

"Exactly so," replied Thornton, his countenance brightening with the warmth of his subject. "But glance for a moment, Mason, at the class of men who were the old instructors of youth,—who were they? Bankrupt tradesmen, superannuated military and naval officers, and in some instances, even stage coachmen ! Pshaw ! Mason, I am sick—it is too absurd to reflect upon ! Lead me out of this labyrinth of ignorance and presumption, and let me breathe the invigorating air of common sense !"

"These men are not so much in fault as the system it represents, or the government which recognises it."

"Nonsense, Mason ; nonsense ! Out of all this rottenness, how could any government form a strong or healthy structure ? The whole system should be remodelled. Place the Educator in his right position ; discourage

quackery of all kinds, especially the 'Educational Quack.'" Thornton's mind was centred in the importance of the subject. "Let every man who opens a School, have a licence ! Let every Schoolmaster, who is not able to teach, be cashiered ; cleanse the Augean stable from all its impurities, and then you'll see men will select the profession of an Educationist as a point of honour—as an agreeable, valuable, and important position. Men would not then, as '*dernier resort*,' fix upon teaching ; but respectable men would take an interest in the science of education."

"You are doubtless quite correct, Thornton, in your estimate of what ought to be done to make the profession respectable. I perfectly agree in all you have said—"

"My dear Mason, you don't know *yet*," hastily interrupted the impetuous Thornton, "anything of the *liberal* treatment the present race of School Assistants receive from all parties ; what mortification they are doomed to suffer. How their feelings are lacerated—torn to pieces, by the vulgar

remarks of the purse-proud, ignorant, though successful speculator." Thornton was ashamed of his vocation. "It is a notorious fact that in the present day, a man, however talented, known to be a School-master, is snubbed, and avoided as though he were not within the pale of civilized society; their name is associated with the most poverty-stricken of our race. 'Poor devil!' says the horrified dame of Fortune; and with that pious ejaculation, she turns away from the *vulgar* object of her remark, with mingled feelings of pity and contempt."

"You will almost force me to think you misanthropic, Thornton," I remarked, wishing to allay his feelings, if possible, by arousing him from his own thoughts.

"No, no, Mason; never," he quickly replied. "I want to see men as they really are; not wearing the gaudy dress of deception. Let there be more of the substantial effects of profession, and then there would be more sincerity and truthfulness existing in the world. But I am weary of the subject, Mason; let us hope for better things,"

he continued, rising to ring the bell. "Then you will call upon the grinder's agent in the morning?"

"I shall be entirely guided by your advice, Thornton—if you will deign to give it," I gravely remarked.

"By all means go, Mason," replied Thornton. "I should like you to know more of him—he is a character, and his room is a school, if not of practical wisdom, yet of successful cunning."

"I dare say I shall be amused, Thornton."

"And instructed," he quickly added. "Don't go into his *state* apartment, but into the *next* room, as he calls it."

"For what purpose?"

"To see human nature in all its phases—to learn from the lips of others, your own troubles and woes." Poor Thornton looked mournful and distressed. "You will meet, Mason, in *that room*, characters which will astonish—bewilder you! Men of giant minds, but led captive by the pigmy tastes and habits of their own unbridled passions."

"Thornton, you are again getting into

the bottomless stream of your sympathy ; and becoming wild with your poetic frenzy, in behalf of these men," I remarked, wishing to stop him from again entering upon the exciting subject.

" You are right, Mason," he meekly replied. " Disconnect me from myself, Mason, and then my mind will not be filled with the distresses of others."

He rose, trembling with agitation. I saw he was more than usually disturbed in his mind, and in order to cause a reaction in his whole system, I suggested a walk. Thornton eagerly seized the idea, and we lost no time in hurrying from the confined world within ourselves, to that gaunt, overgrown existence without, wherein is seen so much to admire, so little to covet, and so much to deplore ! We were in the stream of life ; the tide was flowing rapidly ; we were soon taken beyond the reach of our own thoughts, seeing men, not as they appear to mortal eye, but what they do appear to themselves !

CHAPTER VII.

How refreshing is the balmy breeze of early morn ! how it enters into the heart, and for a time at least drives away, heavy, cloudy care ! How happy too, seem the sons of toil and poverty, as they wend their way with nimble feet, and singing some fragments of a favorite song, to their daily work ; everything then moving teems with activity, the great metropolis appears one vast “ *bee-hive*,” in which all are doing something ; every one then stirring, is about to contribute his quota, be it little or much, to support this great house of industry ;—it is too early for the idlers, they are enshrined within the

curtains of useless indolence, it will be some time ere they breathe the fine aroma of an early morn ; they prefer the midnight revel and mid-day rising to the more healthful habit of retiring to bed at a seasonable hour, that they might be able to rise at a time more rational and less injurious to their health. They know not the luxury of inhaling the air of the metropolis, before it becomes impregnated with the smoke of the foul chimneys, ere it is mixed with the exhalations of poisonous, deadly effluvia ; they are content to have it after it has run its course among all the foul cesspools of filth and "miasma," and hence you perceive them listless and without energy or the inclination to exert their mental or physical powers, they become inert, indolent, and lifeless.

The lounger, too, still sleeps on. His downy couch may be to him a bed of thorns, he may be in a dreamy consciousness of some event that may have afforded him when awake, a slight relief from the natural *ennui* of his indolent life. He might be, even whilst in this state of mental abstraction, led to

believe that everything around him points out one and the same truth, "that he and all things created, were made for a *purpose* ; and that *purpose* was *not* to lead an idle and inactive life." He may have been aroused to think ; and, by the exercise of reflection, have discovered that he was one of those *drones* of the world who exist upon the industry of others. Probably such thoughts as these might make him anxious to inquire into the relative position which he holds, as one of the community, in the great scale of national discipleship, and he may be further induced to try to exert himself for good ; and in that effort for exertion, he may discover the grand secret, the *great fact*, that an attempt to do good never fails of its reward.

Digressing no further upon this subject, it may be well to state, that I felt, when I arose in unusual spirits, it seemed as though I had thrown off that mawkish dress of gloom and repining, and for the future purposed to take things as they really are, not to feel annoyed at the thousand and one

petty ills which occur, but rather to bear, with cool, contented philosophy, *everything* and *anything* which might within the region of probability happen. Impressed with these views, I essayed forth to the office of the "grinder's agent," wishing to be an early attendant at his "levee." I ascertained from Thornton, that *ten* o'clock was the appointed hour, when he was prepared to receive those who had business to transact with him. Availing myself also of Thornton's company, part of the way, I endeavoured to arrive at the office a little before the time its doors are thrown open to his employers. Knowing that he would not expect me before *noon*, I thought by getting there early, I should be able to go direct into his "*next*" room without being discovered, and learn from some of the "*characters*" therein congregated, much that would *pain*, though much that would instruct, and from which I hoped to be able to profit.

Shortly before *ten*, I found myself going up the circular stone staircase, leading to

Mr. Silvertongue's office; and, by my side, although a little in advance, I perceived an elderly man whose grey locks showed that he had passed the middle age; he was dressed in a very seedy suit of black, with a slovenly-tied "white choker." His features were care-worn; his sunken eye, hollow cheeks, and melancholy expression, indicated that this world at least had not been over liberal in its favours to him. I followed him, until we arrived at the landing, and finding he opened a side door and walked in, I did the same; and there at once discovered several persons, who had come thus early to pay their respects to the grinder's agent. My elderly companion moved slowly on; and perceiving a chair without an occupant, he went towards it and sat down. The younger men looked at him with a smile; he, poor fellow, appeared conscious of their object in gazing at him; and averted his head to avoid their sneering looks. The aged applicant's lonely state attracted my notice, and going towards him, I stood there for some time scanning the features, dress,

and other prominent attractions of those men who were then assembled in the grinder's agent's "*next room.*"

There was *one* very unmistakeable look which they all had in common—"disappointed, blighted hopes, disgust of themselves and their vocation." *That* was too conspicuous in all! They appeared men who were driven to this place as a "refuge for the destitute," to seek for a berth which they would never take unless they had been compelled to do so by circumstances over which they had no control. There was not the cheerful smile, the lively careless chat amongst them; but the solemn, severe gloom of despair. Their countenances were the reflex of their hearts, and so they were heavy and sombre. You heard not amongst them the witty remark or pointed allusion, which would elsewhere secure a hearty laugh. Everything here was dark, black, corroding—no light, no glimmer of joy or happiness; all were the painful exponents, the suffering victims of the unfortuitous, uncertain ways of fickle fortune. Their misery seemed increased by the occupation they were doomed to follow.

Their disappointments in life appeared aggravated by the painful degradation of the only alternative for an existence, which presented itself for their acceptance.

Not one amongst them looked happy or cheerful. The old man was a painful specimen of what men like these suffer. He had evidently consumed the most precious portion of his useful life in assisting others to accumulate wealth, whilst he had totally neglected himself. He would, in a few short years more, be incapable of exerting his faculties for his support. Then—*what? where? how* could he live? Has he made a provision for old age? Has he had the ability, the means to do so? If not, when sickness or decrepitude overtake him, whither can he flee for aid? To whom look for succour? Alas! his tribe have no friends! The poor man has his parish! his poor house! The intellectual beggar—the broken down instructor of our youth has nothing. No asylum to shield him, no society to assist him, no sympathizing friends to soothe, no voice of love or affection to smooth the rigid pillow of affliction! He is a poor destitute! A slave's life he has lived, a

slave's death alone awaits him ! Had he been brought up in ignorance, and knew nothing, he would have met with friends. He would have found a provision and a home waiting for him, in his declension of life. Being an educated man, and the educator of our youth, he is neglected, and must look out for himself, or die, as many have done, in poverty and despair.

Be it our noble mission to raise our voice, however feeble, in behalf of this long neglected, useful, valuable class of men. Let them come out from their darksome state, into which, for so long a period, they have been hopelessly cast, and let the public know their trials ! Let the public appreciate their worth ! Then we shall behold the poor Educator no longer a despised being, but a recognised—necessary portion of the community at large.

The old man's history was *long*. Its tale was brief. He had been forced to become a teacher, because he could do nothing else. He had for twenty years been toiling on, and for twenty years he had been suffering misery. He was now nearly worn out.

"I am sick of my life," he hopelessly said, "and the world seems sick of me."

"This profession should be honourable," I remarked.

"Yes, sir, you are right; it should be, but it is not," he replied.

"Why not?"

"I cannot exactly say, but," and he hesitated and whispered slowly—"these sort of places damage the respectability of the profession."

"Why so?"

"You have not been here before, I think?" looking sorrowfully at me.

"I have not."

"I thought so," and he shrugged his shoulders and sighed; "I am well known here. They say I come here more than half-a-dozen other men."

"Why are you here more frequently than others?" I asked; "can you not succeed in getting a situation?"

"Oh yes, sir, I get plenty," and he grinned with anger; "but they don't suit, or I don't suit, or there's a something." The aged applicant

looked around him, and again sighed. "I know pretty well every creek and crevice of this room. I have seen many noble minds here brought low, and perhaps broken, by *that man yonder*," pointing to the door leading to the reception room of the agent.

"How, in what way?"

"You have never had a berth from him?"

"No."

"Then you are a happy man, and a fortunate one if you never get into his books." The old assistant drew from his coat pocket a dirty white handkerchief and covered his eyes.

"You appear moved at something, what is it?"

"To see before me a young man just entering upon the same path which I have trodden twenty years, and knowing what misery and wretchedness will be his lot, makes me feel rather uneasy." I fancied I saw the care-worn cheek moistened with the big tear. It is certain he averted his head, and covered his face with his long, fleshless hands, and sat for some time without articu-

lating a word. "All the men who come here," he continued with a mournful gaze, "regret doing so. I hope you will have no cause, sir. Water runs very smoothly when oil is at the top, you know, sir; but the oil won't always last, then the water becomes muddy and not fit for much."

"What inference am I to draw from what you say?"

"Not much, sir, I dare say; though there's a moral in everything. Men sometimes, at first, when you don't know them," again eagerly looking at the private door—"are very polite and civil, their oil glides along well enough, until you become—" he paused suddenly, as though he were choking from his excitement. I begged him not to dwell upon this topic any more. He exclaimed, with deep emotion, clasping his hands—

"I would rather, sir, sweep the crossings of a street to get a livelihood, than be an assistant in a school; *there* you can have a moment's freedom from care and anxiety."

He was stopped by the door leading to the private sitting-room of the agent sud-

denly opening, and the greater part of the dark head and shoulders of the veritable agent thrust forward into our room. He glanced round at his friends, giving a most condescending smile and nod to some, and an awfully severe look at others: amongst the latter who were thus honoured, I observed was my aged friend. The old man felt his withering scowl.

“He’ll do nothing for me,” said the poor fellow, in bitter agony, when the agent had completed his survey, and shut the door. “He’ll do nothing for me,” he again repeated.

“Why not? How do you know?”

“I understand his looks too well not to know what they mean,” he replied; “there’s no chance for me. I may come here every day and sit in this room from the time it is opened until its close, and he will never give me a chance, or recommend me.”

“What is his reason?”

“He has a reason,” bitterly replied the old pedagogue. “At least he considers it one. “God help the poor fellow who gets into

this man's clutches, who cannot pay him his fee when it is due! He is a marked man, and will never have a chance." The old man wept bitterly, his sobs were loud and heavy. It was harrowing in the extreme to see an aged man, bowed down to the earth with the oppressive weight of irremediable misery, aggravated as it appeared by the neglect, real or imagined, which he had suffered from the agent. I was much hurt to perceive this old educator so greatly cast down. At all times it is painful to *hear* of the distresses of others; but this impression, however powerful at the time, wears away, and the cares and anxieties of life cause us to forget what we have heard. Not so when we are witnesses—when we *see* the affliction of others; there appears at that time, too, a link in the human heart which joins their sufferings to our own sympathies, and makes us participate with them in all their troubles. To hear of suffering is painful at the time, but its effect is transient. To *see* suffering is torturing to the feelings, and its effect is enduring, lasting, and not to be obliterated.

The agent again opened the door, and took another survey. It was astonishing to see the magic-like transition of his face from the scorching heat of the East to the freezing air of the North Pole. He stared at *me* for a second or two, and appeared as though he were trying to recollect who I was—whether I was *worth* a *graceful* nod, or a *chilling look*—until at length he said, in a gracious whisper—

“Mr. Mason, eh! How do you do, Mr. Mason? Will you step this way.”

I accompanied him to his private room. As I passed the other eager expectants, I could hear several of them repeat my name, in a sort of half-surprised kind of whisper; indicating that they knew nothing of me; and wondering who I was, to have such a special mark of attention shown me by the agent.

“I expect a gentleman here very shortly, Mr. Mason,” commenced the crafty agent, “who wants a gentleman to assist in his school;” looking at the fire. “He is a very nice gentleman, Mr. Mason; I am sure you will like him, and be very comfortable.”

He handed me a chair, and placed by me

the "Times," hoping I would try and amuse myself until the "gentleman" arrived. I endeavoured to do so, by watching narrowly his movements, with a view of drawing an outline of his personal appearance, and supposed character.

Mr. Silvertongue was about fifty years of age, rather stout, and thickly set ; he was about the average height, although somewhat inclined to stoop. His shoulders being round, made his naturally short neck appear shorter than it really was. He was dressed in plain black, with his neck *garotted* by a stiff white tie. His dark hair, or rather wig, was most carefully arranged over his somewhat expansive forehead. He had no whiskers ; but a pair of small, dark, crafty-looking eyes, that could accommodate themselves, either to smile upon a customer, or look viciously upon any one who had not satisfied his demands.

There was a great deal in his general appearance that would induce a casual observer to set him down as a person greedy after money ;—obsequious when he liked,—arrogant when he pleased.

There was much of the "*animal*" in his look ;—a heavy, surly expression of the lower part of his face, indicated the possession of strong animal passions and propensities. Altogether, he appeared to be admirably adapted for the position he occupied. He was just the sort of man that the men who employed him required. He was useful to them; and, doubtless, in that particular capacity, his services were considered valuable.

My pleasing hallucinations were interrupted by a loud knock at the agent's outer-door; and before I could look round, the door opened, and a very small man entered the room. He was dressed in the most primitive style, with a large broad-brimmed hat, slouched over his head. An immense camlet cloak enveloped his small body;—an old, large, blue umbrella, did the office of a stick; and his nose was honoured with a pair of old-fashioned silver spectacles. Withal, the antiquity of the little man's external self—there was a vast amount of dignity; the pride of soul in his look, and even in his walk and nod of the head. Approaching the fire, and

unbuttoning his capacious cloak, he commenced puffing away and rubbing his hands so vigorously, that a stranger would have supposed that his hands never had any life in them; or if they had, had taken a long nap, which required the rough usage of their owner to bring them to a consciousness of their having any feeling.

“Good morning, Doctor,” blandly said the agent.

“Good morning, Mr. Silvertongue;—rather sharp morning;—I don’t at all like your London weather and roads. I am always losing myself,—slipping down,—or getting run over. It’s a terrible place, this London.”

“Ah, ah,” obsequiously uttered the agent, with a most winning smile. “You country gentlemen are not accustomed to the bustle of this great city. “Ah, ah, Doctor, you would not do to live in London.”

“You are right, Mr. Silvertongue;—I should be dead in a week; the air is so foul, and the smells so disagreeable.”

“Ah, ah, Doctor, you are right—perfectly right.” The agent looked at me. “This is

the gentleman, Doctor, that I thought would suit you."

"Oh! eh! hem!" said the little Doctor, pretending to look at the fire-place, whilst he glanced at me. "What are his qualifications, Mr. Silvertongue?" The Doctor bridled up and looked large. "You know I must have a downright good scholar—none of your half-and-half sort of men will suit me." Again he gazed at the fire, and leered at me, and then raising himself upon the tip of his toes, exclaimed—

"I must have a *hout-and-outer*, or none at all." The small Doctor again glanced at me, and shook his head in a most commanding manner in the direction of the agent.

"This is the very man for you, Doctor," remarked the agent.

"You think so, do you, Mr. Silvertongue?" snarled the Doctor. "It is no use your sending me men that know nothing. I want a first-rater, and must have nothing short of that." Again he eyed me, as a hungry bear would his intended victim.

"I am quite sure, Doctor, you will find

in this gentleman everything you require," soothingly remarked the agent.

"Oh! very well, Mr. Silvertongue; then I'll hear his qualifications." Whereupon he sat down, folded his arms, and looked professional.

"In classics," commenced the agent, "he has read," continued the agent, running his finger down the column of his ledger, "in Greek, Demosthenes."

"Have you read the *Phillips* then, sir?" asked the learned Doctor, turning round sharply towards me.

I started—almost laughed outright. Remembering in whose august presence I was at that moment, checked my inclination.

"I have read the *Philippics*, sir," I replied, biting my lips.

"Ah! eh! hem! yes; that's it. I meant that; you're right," his optics glistening with confusion. "My memory always leaves me in London. It's very strange. I suppose I lose it in the fog." He again glanced at me, and grinned.

"Aristophanes," continued the agent.

"Stop, stop, Mr. Silvertongue, if you please," interrupted the Doctor, who appeared to require more time to comprehend the names of the authors than the agent was disposed to give him. "Not so fast, if you please, Mr. Silvertongue," bowing graciously to the agent, and looking *severely* learned.

What an incarnation of the sublime was depicted in his countenance at that particular moment! How the marvellous workings of that Colossus mind was then developing itself! How the lore of his youth was passing across its disc, reminding him of the mighty efforts of his early genius!

"And pray, sir," said this modern marvel, looking at me with the subdued, softened smile of pity for my ignorance—"and pray, sir," he again repeated, "what does this gentleman," upon which the Doctor coughed and stammered—many learned men do the same. It was not strange!

"What does this person,"—again the stammering and coughing returned.

"This author, you mean, Doctor," most blandly chimed in the agent.

"To be sure I do," shaking his head to collect in one general focus his scattered thoughts.

"What then does this—gent—pers—hem!"

"Author," again suggested the agent.

"Yes, this *author*, sir, treat about?" The Doctor was evidently a man of nerve. He was not at all abashed at the *slight* error into which his abstracted state of mind had unconsciously led him. He turned towards me with an awful stare, a sort of compound of—(I had almost said *ignorance*, but that could not apply to him; and) *impudence*—alas! how wrong I am again to impute such a character, assume such a "qualification!"

"What, sir, does this—" he again stumbled.

"Author," whispered the obsequious agent.

"What, sir, does this *author* treat of?" Never was word before or since so roughly

handled. The Boanerges tone of the learned Doctor's voice when he pronounced it was alarming. Surely he must be a great man. The thunder of his voice was so peculiarly indicative of greatness !

"Frogs, birds," I replied, almost suffocated from suppressed laughter.

"What, sir, did you say?" exclaimed the little man, in astute wonder.

"Birds, frogs," I again repeated.

"Frogs, birds, did you say? And pray what about them, sir?" He rolled his heavy head about, until his optics centred upon the agent. This accommodating gentleman looked grave, solemn with the thoughts of—but no matter what. We will not dive into the mysterious cell of his calculating brain ; certain it is, he gave the Doctor a nod, which the Doctor appeared fully to understand. "Pray go on, Mr. Silvertongue," he graciously commanded.

"The plays of Sophocles and Æschylus, and—"

"Stop, stop, Mr. Silvertongue, if you

please," roared out the Doctor, turning himself in his chair to have another gaze at me.

"The plays of Sophocles and Heskellus," remarked the profound Doctor with great solemnity. "Those plays are wonderful! What a glorious insight into human nature they afford! What sublime compositions!" He had reached the culminating point of his vast conceptions! He sat contemplating, as most great minds do, after they have "delivered"—nothing! "Proceed, sir, if you please," whereupon he cast a look of lively sympathy at me, and again shook his head.

"In Latin," continued the agent, "Tacitus, Cicero, Terence, Juvenal, Vir—"

"Stop, stop, Mr. Silvertongue, if you please." The Doctor was uneasy in his chair, or there was something which caused him to winch and twist about. "Let me hear them again, Mr. Silvertongue, if you please."

The agent again repeated them. The Doctor, all attention—wrapped in wonder. His eyes were again upon me—again he shook his head and drew his ancient-looking cloak around him.

“Thank you, Mr. Silvertongue, that will do—go on.”

“In Mathematics,” the agent continued; “Algebra, Euclid, Trigonometry, and Conic Sections.”

“Once more, if you please, Mr. Silvertongue.” The agent, obedient as a slave, read them again.

“Ah!” says the small man, looking at me with an immense effort to appear learned—“ah, sir! fine subjects *them*! What a mine of wealth is contained under every one of *them* names! Ah! it is astonishing wonderful! But proceed, sir, if you please.”

“The ‘Differential Calculus and Principia’—”

“Stop! stop! Mr. Silvertongue,” his mind opening with the greatness of the subject. “What did you say last?” looking curiously at the agent, then glancing at me with a smile—“whose *Calculator*?—upon what *Principle*? Eh! Mr. Silvertongue? Once more, if you please!” and he rolled himself about in his chair.

“The great Sir Isaac Newton’s sublime

work, called 'The Principia, and the Differential Calculus,'" I modestly answered.

"Oh! ah! hem! I did not know the works when I was a youngster." He looked at me with a most convincing gaze. "They could not have been *written then*."

How wondrous wise! how superlatively learned! Well, Doctor, we shall know more about you, I hope, before we have finished our narrative.

"What more, Mr. Silvertongue?" he inquired, appearing to have had a glimmering idea, that the exact requirements which he sought had not been named.

"I hope, Doctor," said the agent, "I have enumerated enough to satisfy you?"

"Well, well! I suppose it must do." He again looked at me in a somewhat more thoughtful pounds, shillings and pence manner. "What is he worth? how much shall I give him?" appeared bubbling up in his mind. "But, Mr. Silvertongue, you did not say anything about *Reading* and *Writing*. However, that's enough."

He rose, and walked towards the window;

the agent followed him. There was a short, suspicious, suspending, scale-balancing consultation. The agent, probably, thinking of his fee—the little doctor calculating to a fraction what it would cost extra to board me, which, added to what he thought I was worth, would give him the sum total of the expense he would incur by my engagement.

“My name, sir,” said the small man, approaching me from the window, “my name is Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum, of Blinkhum Hall, in the Palatinate. Everybody knows Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum, eh—Mr. Silvertongue?” with a most killing smile towards the agent, and a survey of me. “I shall be happy to see you as one of my staff; I think you’ll suit me very well, eh—Mr. Silvertongue?” again looking at this functionary. “I have several gentlemen, all of distinguished merit; and I shall be proud to enrol your name amongst them, sir.”

He glanced at the agent, and bowed to me. “I shall leave all the necessary arrangements with *my friend* Mr. Silver-

tongue. He will acquaint you, sir, with every particular. Good morning, sir."

The "necessary arrangements" were soon made. The agent received his fee, and condescended to look agreeable. I left the office of the "grinder's agent" an acknowledged Master in the Academical Establishment of Blinkhum Hall, conducted by the renowned Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum, and a numerous staff of "able assistants."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE heart which has been suddenly robbed of its dreamiest hopes of future happiness, becomes deadened to all the sweet—soothing influences of friendship. Its sunshine has been eclipsed by the dark rays from the actions of the cunning and perfidious, that it cannot centre itself upon any fixed principle of action. The world's insincerity has created a chaotic mass of doubts and waverings, which nothing can allay.

The nobler principles of the mind—the generous aspirations of the soul become withered, chilled with the cold freezing blast of disappointment. There is found no dry

place upon which the mind can rest ; like the timid dove, it flies from itself, with the hope of finding some shore upon which it can dwell in safety. Like the dove it may discover a place ; but, unlike this “bird of hope,” it finds there no secure harbour of refuge—no “olive branch” to indicate the perpetual youth, the never-fading freshness of undying friendship. Even so, in a great measure, did I feel on the evening preceding my departure for my new quarters. The awful suddenness of my father’s reverses—the callous-hearted, calculating solicitor—the money-worshipping agent, and the strange compound, ’yclept Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum, all told me the same tale—“That man of the present age was a being who lived exclusively for himself—that he valued his fellow-man only as a means of obtaining his end—and that end was *Money*.”

In a few short months seemed crowded together the results of an age. Events had followed events with such rapidity that I had not the power, or the will, to think ! I had gone down the stream without making

the least resistance or effort to oppose its course. My accidental meeting with Thornton, his advice, and my vocation in perspective, were so romantic—so mythical—that it required more than an average amount of common sense to persuade myself that it was a fact—a sober, earnest truth !

My parents were settled in the southern part of France, whither my sisters were about to proceed, to reside with them. My father's affairs had been thrown into Chancery, where doubtless they would remain dwindling away amid the corruption of that foul court. Everything was disjointed, all happiness had been sacrificed, all friends were lost—relations scattered, and I alone—isolated ! About starting upon the journey of life with a head tolerably well filled with book learning, but without an iota of an idea of that worldly knowledge which was the current coin of this practical, selfish age.

After all the complaints of our hard lot, when the time comes for our departure to a new scene of labour, where probably we shall

be more comfortable, there is yet a lingering regret that we are about to change. We look upon our present state with less dissatisfaction, and are sorry that we have concluded an arrangement which involves a change. We never fancied there was so much real enjoyment—we could not believe we had been so happy until now, that the period had arrived when we were about to resign those things which had contributed to our comfort and enjoyment. *Now* we could see their value, *now* we could perceive their worth, *now* we could deplore that we were about to leave them—for a time—perhaps for ever !

My journey to Blinkum Hall was long and tedious. However, it afforded me an opportunity of glancing at my own probable prospects in this fresh line of life. My thoughts reverted towards the independent, free, and unrestrained course of life which I had enjoyed at College. I could not expect in my new position anything approximating to this freedom of life and action. I was fully sensible of the vast difference. I was prepared

to submit without a murmur to the restraint of the situation, if it did not encroach upon the sacred duty of honour or principle.

Withal these anticipations I felt cheered with the reflection that probably these very hardships which I expected, would be the means of forming my character, by making me better able to pursue a proper course of action. That they would teach me those grand truths which would force me to look more *into* myself, to *scan* the workings of my own heart, to check its unholy desires, its unhallowed aspirations. To teach me how to discipline it; how to control, how to conquer myself? Again, I was relieved of much of my prophetic misery by the certainty of my being able to learn something more of the characters of those persons who are entrusted with the education of our youth; a subject which had frequently occupied my mind, as being fraught with such momentous consequences to the well-being of the community at large, and to the interest, stability, and prosperity of our country.

Thornton's vivid picture had, in a great

degree, excited my curiosity, and made me desirous to know more about these things. The interview, too, which I had had with my future principal, had not at all diminished my desires, it had rather shown me that I was in the right track to elicit much that I required. As Thornton said, it was a school for those who *teach*, as for those who are taught. With all our philosophy, and ascetic indifference to the genial influence of friendship, there is still a gloom which seizes the most courageous, when, for the first time, he bids adieu to those in whose love and esteem he has lived, as it were, from the earliest dawn of infancy to the moment of their separation. Now that he is about to be removed from the objects of his dearest attachments, he becomes aware of the potent influence of that love and affectionate regard ; now he experiences, in an especial manner, the fullest force of these emotions ; now he is able to test the sincerity of his love ; now he can ascertain whether his attachments are pure, whether he is bound to others by the indissoluble bond of affection, or joined by a “ rope

of sand." Whether he does possess, and to what extent, that God-like, sublime, and rare quality—Friendship!

At such seasons, too, how memory calls back many little acts of endearment, which we had forgotten! How she brings to the surface thousands of instances of visible proofs of regard from our friends, which had been sunk for a long time to the bottom in the Gulf of Forgetfulness! With what a force—life-like reality, they now possess our minds! How we can remember the most minute circumstances, the most trivial detail, as though it were an event of yesterday. How the many excellences of our friends' characters—their intrinsic virtues—blazon forth in full meridian splendour, reproaching us for our disregard or neglect of their wishes, desires, or advice!

Alas! every moment thus occupied by these reflections, only assists the ponderous engine to carry us farther away from the objects of our solicitude. As distance increases the wide gap between us, so our resolutions to become altogether a different

kind of being than we were before, increases also in a direct ratio. We will condone for every fault—we will do penance for every omission !

In this way we go onward through life ; we remember only to forget. The good resolves of to-day travel through the brain with a velocity far greater than the engine which is now dragging me onward, and before to-morrow's sun has arisen, all these good resolutions will probably have evaporated into thin, invisible, formless atoms—ethereal creatures of the brain, without any substantiality ; existing only upon the excitement of our imagination, and when that has subsided into its usual calm state, then, as visionary vapours they fly away—are forgotten, banished, remembered no more !

How unsubstantial are man's thoughts ! How unstable his mind ! How undecided—uncertain his purposes !

It was late in the evening when I arrived at the cathedral town, on the borders of the Palatinate, where I found waiting a conveyance which the considerate Doctor Theophilus

Blinkhum had sent for me. After an hour's drive, I found myself at the house of the learned Doctor; and upon my alighting was startled with—

“Welcome to Blinkhum Hall,” lustily shouted out by a gentleman, who, with a “Davy” in his hand, came out to receive me; whereupon I thanked him for his congratulatory language, and he undertook to usher me into the august presence of Dr. Theophilus Blinkhum. The Doctor appeared to have calculated upon the chances of making a favourable impression upon me, for I noticed a party of friends assembled, to all of whom I was formally introduced.

“I am glad to see you, Mr. Mason, at Blinkhum Hall,” said Doctor Theophilus, extending his hand and giving mine a most friendly shake. “Allow me to introduce you to Mrs. Blinkhum, and her sister, Miss Nocks; and this is my most worthy friend, our rector, Mr. Bowman.” He looked round and continued, “These gentlemen are your future colleagues. This is Mr. Slylook, my classical master, and this is Mr. Simpleface, my mathematical

master; and here is Monsieur La Fishe, professor of French." The little man again looked about him. "I think, Mr. Mason, you have seen the most important portion of my staff." He was thoughtful. "The *other* gentlemen you will see to-morrow." There was a strange hesitation in his manner, which attracted my notice. The subject was changed, and he was more at ease.

"You have had a long journey, Mr. Mason," observed the reverend friend, approaching me with a bland, frank, good-hearted expression.

"Very tedious," I replied; "somewhat dull."

"Ah! nothing, sir—nothing to what it used to be," chimed in the Doctor; "in the old coach time. It *was* a journey, then! Why, sir, I have started from here on Monday, and not reached London till the Wednesday morning."

"Some accident, I suppose," remarked the Rector.

"Accident! No, sir, nothing of the sort," sharply replied the Doctor. "Why, sir, we

were for twelve hours jammed fast in the snow—could not move an inch—snow coming down as though it had never snowed before. Nimble Joe, the coachman—you recollect him, Mr. Bowman,” addressing the Rector.

“Of the Old Quicksilver?”

“Exactly; he was a capital fellow,” resumed the humourous Doctor. “His presence of mind upon that occasion was wonderful! To see how cool he took everything, when every one was suggesting *this* thing or *that* thing to be done. ‘Here we are, mum,’ said old Joe to a *dyspeptercal* old lady inside, ‘here we are, mum, and here we shall like to be, mum, until we move on.’ Ah! ah! he was a capital fellow.” The Doctor was quite lively; he enjoyed the anecdote more than any of us. “Those were the good old coach times, as they are called.”

“There was more enjoyment in that kind of travelling,” remarked the Rector, “than at present.”

“Decidedly,” replied the Doctor; “but then, look at the advantages! I can now go to London and back, and do business there,

in a day ; a distance of more than four hundred miles."

"Distance, I think, Doctor, has been annihilated," replied the Rector, "we must now calculate the time."

"To be sure we must," responded the Doctor ; "distance is nothing, time is everything, which is of vast importance to *us* professional men." He bridled himself up, and looked around him. "Now my dear," he resumed, addressing his spouse, "we shall be glad of supper. I am sure Mr. Mason requires something after his journey."

The Doctor performed the office of the master of the ceremonies. "Now, gentlemen," he continued, "will you be seated ; Mr. Mason will sit on the left hand of Mrs. Blinkhum, Mr. Bowman, will you take your usual place on her right ; and I think most of you," looking at the staff with a smile, "know your places."

The learned man having taken his seat, the smaller fry followed ; and we were very soon in the midst of an active discussion of—the supper. There was little conversation during

this important duty ; all appeared to enjoy it too much to waste a moment in idle talk. The cloth was at length cleared, and the conversatson became general and animating.

“ Ah ! ah ! ” roared the little Principal, so loudly that I started, “ very good, Mr. Slylook, very good ; but it will not do. I admit it is very ingenious, extremely so ; but I saw through it directly, directly,” upon which the little man hit the table with his knuckles, and with a grinning sort of nod, he looked about him full of admiration, as he wished all of us fully to understand that there was not in existence a man equal to cope with Dr. Theophilus Blinkhum !

“ My dear, you have forgotten the grog,” he remarked, smiling most uxoriously at his loving spouse.

“ You must not be so impatient,” replied the gentle Mrs. Blinkhum, “ Helen has gone for the liquor-stand.” Mrs. Blinkhum’s sister at that opportune moment appeared, loaded with the expected treasure. “ Make haste, Helen, for the Doctor is in a fever about the whiskey-punch.” Whereupon, both Mrs.

Blinkhum and her sister, Miss Nocks, looked at each other and smiled. And the lively Mrs. Blinkhum, whilst she was engaged in making the favourite "Lethean drink," being still amused at the impatience of her truly, legally "lord and master," said to her sister, "Oh ! dear, Helen, what plagues these men are. I hope, my dear, you will never be troubled with one of them."

Miss Nocks did not agree with her sister in this latter remark, and therefore she became extremely grave and sentimental ; and, moreover, as she was pouring the hot water into the goblets, she almost scalded her sister, which little affair caused the most lively sensation, and made Miss Nocks blush very crimson, and caused Mrs. Blinkhum to look very red with—heat, and induced Mr. Bowman, the rector, to heal the breach.

"I presume, madam," he blandly said, "you would not be so cruel as to condemn your sister to become a nun ?"

"Oh ! my sister is so aggravating when she likes," exclaimed the still blushing Miss Nocks.

"Not at all, my dear," replied Mrs. Blinkhum, very teasingly, "but you know, Mr. Bowman, she cannot bear to be thought 'old maidish.'"

"Of course not," replied her sister, with an indignant toss of the offended little head.

"And ergo," shouted the learned Doctor, giving the table another terrific knock with his knuckles, raising his voice to the loudest key, and gazing about him with an air of triumph, "and ergo, you are wrong, you have no data to go upon, you cannot get out of the difficulty; and if you cannot do *that*, I contend I am right."

The learned Dr. Blinkhum was remarkably eloquent,—at least he thought so. There never was a special pleader, who tried to make a deep, convincing impression upon his client, who worked harder for the attainment of his end, than our friend the Doctor. He wished to show me he was a man of no ordinary calibre; that argument after argument he could rebut, dissect, and analyse!—reduce it to atoms! That his opponents were mere pigmies; that *he* was

the *great, gigantic* Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum, who could afford to be generous to his *pigmy* assailants. Verily, Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum, of Blinkhum Hall, thou art a remarkable man !

The object of his merciless onslaught was Mr. Slylook, his Classical Professor ; he was powerless, and bore his castigation with heroic fortitude. The Doctor talked so fast, and so loud, that no one knew what he was saying.

“What is the nature of their discussion, Mr. Mason ?” inquired the Rector of Blinkhum, across the table.

“I really don’t know, I have not been able to catch a word of their argument.”

“You see, Mr. Mason,” continued the Rector, “the Doctor becomes so excited with his subject, that it is almost impossible to glean anything from him, until he has cooled down a little.”

“You will admit, Doctor,” squeezed in Mr. Slylook.

“I will admit nothing at all, sir,” sharply replied the Doctor. “What should I admit ?

Why allow what you cannot prove?" The loquacious Doctor cast around him a look of calm, martyr-like, resignation, he once again sounded the table with his knuckles; all was attention, a smile encircled that benevolent lip. "My dear sir," he resumed, addressing his classical professor, "you must remember, *I* have not had years of experience in discussing with *them* subtle reasoners, who attempted by their wicked designs to subvert the moral foundation of our glorious faith, without knowing how to combat with an opponent." He took up his goblet, raised it to his mouth, and began to drink. It was empty! His abstracted state of mind had caused him to forget this *biblical* fact. He gazed wistfully at its empty state, and in despair placed it once again upon the table; glancing at each of our glasses, and perceiving that they were approximating to a state of emptiness, he called to his wife, in those sweet accents of *persuasive endearment* which a *Benedict* only can use, when he wishes to coax his wife into, or out of, anything. "My dear," apos-

trophized the Doctor, "a little more grog upon this happy occasion, will, I am sure, not be disagreeable." He looked benignly at all of us, and with a smile of the highest polish he passed his glass, and resumed his argument.

"Why, sir, I have discussed topics with the paid advocates of this dangerous society for sixteen hours at a time, before immense masses of the people, all in favour of my adversaries." He paused, and took a deep drink of the creature comfort that was contained in that nicely cut goblet. "I have been, sir, pitched into the river by these rag-a-muffins, and been obliged to escape out of a window, over some house-tops, into a back street, where I have been rescued by some of my friends, who, at the risk of their lives, came to my assistance; I should think, sir, *I* know what it is to endure a little!" The Doctor's recital had seriously affected himself. There never was a man who so much deserved "*immortality*" to his name and deeds. Any work which might appear upon the sainted subject of "Martyrology" would

be imperfect without a just tribute being paid to the name and patriotic service rendered to his country by Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum. "Ah, sir!" he continued, "I was not destitute of friends or encouragement. I have been complimented by nearly every *nobleman in the land*, for my *in-domit*able energy in "putting down" these men; and, sir, *when Her Majesty*—" Here was a killing pause. The Doctor raised his voice and head to a great altitude. "Yes, sir, when our *Most Gracious Queen* expressed a wish to *see me*, sir! When I was presented as "*Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum*," the *un-defatigable* defender of "*Fuddlism*," Her Majesty condescended to *smile upon me*," he looked royal himself. "Yes, sir, Her Majesty, as a mark—an *especial mark* of her royal favour, *smiled upon Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum!*" And Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum forthwith took up his glass, and having drained it of its soothing contents, reclined in his chair, in a right royal attitude and grace.

It was now getting late, our duties would command early rising, and the reverend

friend having finished his potation arose, shook hands, buttoned up his coat, and departed.

The ladies quietly retired, the bell was rung, candles were brought, and we each to our separate rooms repaired.

Monsieur La Fishe, professor of French, chaperoned me to my new quarters. There was a lurking slyness about him, which struck me as being opposed to the agreeableness of the evening's entertainment. *This* mysticism I could not understand. *That* suppressed, choking, attempt to speak, I could not comprehend! What did it portend? Was I too excited to perceive clearly—to define accurately his strange actions? Why *those* horrid gesticulations? *that* hideous *grin*, as we arrived at the door of my bed-room? Were there any, and what, associations uppermost in his mind, in reference to the room or his friendly office? Was he anxious, yet reluctant, to unfold any secret—guard me against any exigencies that may arise? Was I to infer, that what I had witnessed *that night* was not the real,

natural side of the picture—that the dark side had been studiously avoided, designedly concealed from view? What was I to glean from *that* look, as he placed my candle upon the table? What was I to infer from *that* shudder, as he glanced at my bed? Was I in a dream? Did I really, truly, exercise my faculties, and by their aid, did I see these strange things?

“Good night, sir,” said my guide, “I hope you will *sleep well*.” He again gazed at the bed and shuddered.

“Good night, Monsieur,” I replied, extending my hand.

The Frenchman grasped it firmly, and in a half whisper, said—

“*New cloth*, Monsieur, looks well at first, but it does not always *wear well*.”

He closed the door and left me in a labyrinth of thought. The grey dawn of morn peered into my chamber, ere I had closed my eyes in sleep!

CHAPTER IX.

THE enigmatical conduct of Monsieur La Fishe, Professor of the French Language at Blinkhum Hall, had contributed, in a great measure, to that restlessness of mind which prevented my enjoying the refreshing influences of sleep. *That* mystery of manner, *those* twists of the body, (so peculiarly French !) were calculated to shake the good opinion which the Doctor's ingenuous conduct had induced me to form of his character.

The prejudices under which I labored from our first interview at the office of the "grinder's agent," were in some degree

removed from my mind, after the termination of my first evening's sojourn at the Hall; and I must honestly confess, that when I wished the Doctor "Good night," I *then* was inclined to look upon him with favor. I saw he was full of conceit—exploding with bombast. Nevertheless, I thought there was something beneath all these externals, which would counterbalance the drawbacks his boasting was calculated to create in the mind of a casual observer.

When, however, the French master left me to myself, with the strange hints he had thrown out, for my reflection, I began to perceive that my opinions were not in accordance with the deductions he appeared desirous that I should draw. There appeared some dark spot in the Doctor's character, intimately associated with my position. It was a mystery into which I could not then dive. It was a black void, beyond which I could not penetrate. It was fuel to my excited brain, which increased my doubts, and led

my mind into a wilderness of ideas, which made me feel unhappy and desolate.

It was true, my experience of the trickery of the world was necessarily limited. It is equally true that my father's downfall ought to have taught me an important lesson—should have made me *more* suspicious, and *less* confiding—should have caused me to weigh well the actions of mankind; to scan their motives; anticipate their designs! How was it possible that I could have foreseen all these things? How could it be supposed that I could dive into the remote cells of the roguish mind, and there discover its deeply-laid schemes; its wicked intents and cruel purposes. How could I learn all these truths, with a mind so limited in worldly knowledge—so deficient in actual observation!

How could I conclude that the independence of a mind, otherwise noble, is no barrier against the intrusive agency of selfishness? That a man, for his ulterior ends, will assume

a character foreign to his nature—dazzle the sight of the novice with the glare of assumed honesty, going onward in this road with so much plausibility that it would take the most astute tactician to discover the counterfeit from the pure metal; to observe and detect the spurious dross from the chaste, brilliant ore? Was it then surprising, that I was captivated by the specious dogmas, the plausible eloquence of this very renowned Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum?

How could an unsophisticated mind understand the workings of the subtle schemer. How could he comprehend his oblique meaning—how see clearly his contortions of an idea! How imagine that men are made of such malleable stuff, that they twist and twirl into all manner of forms and shapes, for the purpose of putting the simple off their guard—of entrapping and deceiving even those who are as cunning as themselves!

How was an inexperienced young man to know, to understand, to comprehend all these

mysteries ! How, then, could I read correctly the serpentine windings of such a character as that which has been portrayed, as belonging exclusively to the veritable, ambiguous Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum !

The sound of a large bell announced to the inmates of the Hall, that it was time to arise. I welcomed its herald-like notes with pleasure ; and with more than usual haste, I dressed, and was soon in the school-room, with a crowd of "youthful inspectors" examining me with great particularity. *Here*, was one bolder than the rest, slyly looking at me with a grin, and then hastening off to his companions in a remote corner of the room. *There*, was a little timid fellow, sidling towards me, and venturing to take a peep ; wondering if I should be kind, whether, if he did not know his lessons, I should report him to the Doctor, and have him punished !

But hark ! Why this commotion amongst the boys ? Why are they putting away

their slates and books? Why are most of them looking so lively, and impatiently trying to be quiet? It is upon the stroke of eight—that joyful hour which informs the laborious student, that another and more pleasing labour is at hand. The bell for breakfast is about to summon them to that early, pleasant meal. They are all breathless with anxiety to hear its welcome sound. The clock has struck! The bell has sounded! The boys are on their way to the breakfast room! They are all seated! Their work commences!—and I have power and time to breathe, and to reflect.

What can be more delightful than to see a hundred or more boys sitting down in the hearty enjoyment of their meals? Their appetites sharpened by fun and frolicsomeness—their faces ruddy with health and happiness.

Watch narrowly that boy yonder, with his round red cheeks, and small peeping eyes, how he is waiting for an opportunity

to practise some joke or trick upon his pale-faced, simple-looking neighbour. Observe him watching, until the poor little simpleton turns his head, and as a hawk darts upon the luckless little bird, so the peeping eyed boy seizes the lump of butter that was upon the plate of his victim, who, when he looks round again, finds it gone. His modesty prevents his making any remark upon his loss, although it cannot stop the crimson hue from suffusing his pallid cheeks. However he contentedly makes his breakfast from his butterless bread. Look now at his crafty neighbour, how he sits there winking and laughing with his friends, at the simplicity of their poor timid little companion; how they all enjoy the joke at his expense; how the chubby-faced sharper smacks his lips, in eating the stolen portion; how the recollection of his own cunning increases the relish that he has for the purloined morsel.

Let us trace these boys a little further.

The red-faced youngster is first and foremost in all the rows and scrapes of the school. His name is always in the "Black Book," for disturbances of various kinds or degrees. His little dupe is generally at the head of his class; his name has never adorned the leaves of that dreaded book; his lessons are never neglected; his conduct is most exemplary.

Again, we follow them into the playground. The one all noise and bluster being at the head of any noisy game, making everyone else submit to his dictation. The other, modest and retiring, sitting silently down in some secluded spot, where you find him reading some interesting, profitable work. The one ever quarrelling with, and bullying his companions. The other never says, or speaks, or thinks an angry word or thought to any one.

Let us again dwell a little more upon their career. They have both left school. Without tracing that intermediate state preceding manhood, let us at once, again,

behold them arrived at manhood. The red-faced school-boy has now become the stout, burly, well-built man. He still retains the same roguish expression in his countenance; his eyes are the same little, twinkling orbs as formerly. He is the same in nature, though not in size; his habits are unchanged; his propensities not in the least subdued. He is in every sense of the word, in every action of his manhood life, the self-same boy as when at school. As a man he is sly, cunning, and domineering; ever in scrapes brought on by his indomitable self-will and love of power. He must be foremost in everything or nowhere. His tyrannical temper has alienated all friends; he stands alone, destitute of sympathy from any one; no one respects him, because his habits are contrary to the ordinary conduct of man. The good opinion of no one he possesses—the confidence of no one has he secured. Onward he goes, despised by all, trusted by none. An outcast he has become, and in the autumn

of his life, he falls a victim to his vicious habits, aggravated by the consciousness that he is suffering the effects of that unchecked violence of disposition, which was allowed to develop itself, unrestrained, to so fatal an extent when at school.

Turn we now to that meek, studious little fellow, whom we noticed as his schoolfellow. Do you see, yonder, that pale, thoughtful face sitting with the ermine robe, the large full wig, listening with the most profound attention to the *dry*, though lucid argument of some one "learned in the law?" Do you observe that delicate white hand taking notes of the cause? Hark! do you listen to that silvered tone, bell-like voice, summing up to the jury the evidence which has been produced? Do you mark the gentleness of manner, the mildness of expression, the ease and impressiveness with which he explains the various technicalities of the law, as bearing upon this particular case?

Do you, in imagination, behold all this?

Then realize in your minds, the successful career of our little, modest, youthful companion. Upon his leaving school, he did not forget the *habit* he acquired;—he still continued the *student*; and at one of our Universities, highly distinguished himself as a scholar. Pursuing his career, he rose rapidly in the profession he had selected, until he was rewarded with a seat upon the judicial bench, where he now sits, as bright and *spotless* an ornament, as ever adorned that *spotless* place of wisdom and learning.

How true is the aphorism that—“*The child is father of the man!*”

Breakfast was now over; and whilst the boys went to play, the masters assembled to arrange about the classes. The learned doctor was in unusual good humour. He rubbed his hands, and laughed and talked with so much glee, that he caused every one to laugh and talk too.

“What do you think *on ’em*, Mr. Mason?” addressing me.

Inferring that he alluded to his pupils, I replied :—" They appear a nice set of boys ; but I have not seen much of them."

" True, true, Mr. Mason," replied the small man, and casting a fond self-immolating look around the room ;—" I see you have great discernment, for as you say, these chaps *are* a nice set of boys *now* ; but, sir, you should have seen 'em when they first came to *my* establishment. They were rummuns, and no mistake." The Doctor stopped to fetch breath, and gaze around him. " Ah, sir," shaking his head, and wiping his spectacles,—"*they were then* the most vicious young rascals you'd see in a day's walk ;—" but," and again he paused to breathe ;—" but, Mr. Mason, you'll *now* see the difference. I bring 'em round in double quick time. They soon find me out ; and I very soon tame 'em." He grinned approvingly, and nodding his head towards his classical professor :—" Eh, Mr. Slylook ; what do you say ? Don't you think they soon understand me ?"

“Decidedly, Doctor,” blandly replied the Professor of Classics.”

The small principal took great credit to himself for his system of speedily converting a boy, however bad or incorrigible, into a remarkably docile, orderly pupil. According to the learned doctor’s dictum, his system performed most wonderful cures. There never was a case, however hopeless, which did not receive immediate benefit from the skill of this great man.

We shall perceive, as we go along with him, in the journey of life, whether he did accomplish these marvellous results ; whether this desideratum was, and to what extent, realized ; or, whether effects of an opposite tendency showed themselves, through his “popularizing system of education ;” whether pupils, who did go to Blinkhum Hall tolerably well-disciplined, did not leave this renowned place with minds vitiated by example ; whether their minds were a reflex

of their fatherly guide and instructor ; and, if so, what was the composition of *that* great original. If their minds were corrupt—their morals lax—their notions of right and wrong dimmed with the dark glimmer of selfishness. If all these were the results—emanations from the master mind, who guided and instructed them, what (may it not be fairly and properly asked) was—could be—that guiding mind ? If the copy was like the original, and that copy bad and corrupt,—what was the original ?

“I scarcely know what to give you to do, Mr. Mason, this morning,” said the Doctor.

“I suppose you’re not over nice on that head,” he added with a condescending smile.

“Let us see, who takes the caligraphical class, Mr. Slylook ?”

“I think *that* class is disengaged, Doctor,” replied Mr. Slylook.”

“Well, Mr. Mason, suppose you try that,” said the principal. Then scanning me—“Can you *mend pens* pretty well, Mr. Mason ?”

I was so amazed at the employment selected for me, together with the coolness of the Doctor's question, whether "I could *mend pens*" that I could not reply. The little man saw my confusion, but pretended not to notice it, looked at me with a careless matter-of-fact smile, remarking—

"You'll find, Mr. Mason, that *this* is an easy job," looking at me furtively. "I suppose you can write tolerably well. You must point out to them the *angles, conjunctions, and proportions* of the letters. It's very easy work." He again surveyed me. "Are you a pretty good disciplinarian? *That's* an important point with me;" again eyeing me. "You can make a pretty good noise in school, I suppose, Mr. Mason?" again glancing at me; "*that's* half the battle in school keeping; make yourself heard amongst them, and then you'll soon get 'em under you;" he again slyly looked at me. "You can get up pretty well. It is good for your health, and sets a good example to the boys. I am very par-

ticular on this point." Again he scanned me with a convulsed grin. "I suppose you can *drill* the boys tolerably well. *That's* fine exercise, and expands the chest and makes the boys look healthy and—"

"I think, Doctor Blinkhum," I at length ventured to remark, when I had recovered from the mortification under which I felt myself on hearing this huge catalogue of heterogeneous duties, and being resolved to stop the active Doctor in the recital of the peculiarities of my post; "I scarcely think, Doctor, I perfectly understand your meaning,"—the Doctor's glare was withering. Nothing daunted, I continued, "I am afraid you'll find me not competent to discharge these various duties in addition to what you expressly—"

The calculating schoolmaster saw at once what I was going to add, and with a sullen, coarse tone of voice, snappishly stopped me.

"What, sir," with *such* a grin. "What, sir, can't you teach writing? ah! ah! ah!" He

paused, and looked at the others. "Why, sir, I thought *any* old woman could teach *that*; but, sir, I will assist you in your first lesson."

"I hope you will distinctly understand me," I observed, being nettled with his coarse, vulgar address; "that I engaged with you to teach *mathematics*, and not writing."

"*Mathematics!*" sneered the Doctor, taking off his spectacles to wipe them, that he might have time to reflect. "*Mathematics!*" he repeated. "Of course I did, and sir, my system is based entirely upon this science. *Writing*, sir, as it is taught here, is *mathematics*, and nothing less. What are angles but part of *mathematics*? What are angles but part of *writing*? Therefore I presume it does not require much depth of knowledge to see, that if they agree in this way, they must have the one and the same basis." He walked away, and grinned fiercely; I followed him, being resolved to know more accurately

the nature of my office. He wanted to end the discussion, but I was determined to come to some understanding as to the nature of my duties.

“What is caligraphy?” I inquired, approaching him.

He leered at me with an awful grin; then turning to his Professor of Classics, he sneeringly remarked: “Not know what caligraphy is! Well, that’s good, capital!”

“What is writing?” I again inquired.

The Doctor found he could not “pooh, pooh” me off any longer, so he at once assumed the dictator.

“Why, sir, caligraphy *is* caligraphy!” he coughed; “and, sir, writing *is* writing!” He again paused, and eyed me. “But, sir, I expect every one who is here to put his shoulder to the wheel, and to do his best to assist in keeping this vast machine moving.”

“Exactly so, Doctor—no one can object to do so; but let my duties be clearly defined, that I may know what I have to do.”

"*Do, sir?*" interrupting me; "*do sir?* Why, I expect you and every one else to *do* everything that is to be done."

"Well, Doctor Blinkhum," I firmly replied, "I did not expect to be employed in teaching *writing*."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Mason," said the Doctor, sharply, "*writing* is not taught here; and you, nor any one else, will teach it."

"I understood you to say that I was to have the *writing* class."

"No, sir, it is not a *writing* class at all." The Doctor was haughty, and his little dignity greatly elevated. "There are such classes in National and other Charity Schools. But we, sir, in an establishment like mine, where I have at the present time the great-grandson of the nephew of a baronet under my charge, as well as the sons of several people of quality"—the Doctor again paused to eye me—"we, sir, don't know the name of *writing* here. It would not do, sir, to teach

here under that common name." Again he paused, and emphatically exclaimed: "No, sir! we don't know anything about a Writing Class; ours"—and his head was raised to an alarming height—"ours is the Caligraphical."

He took from his pocket his handkerchief, blew his nose lustily, and looked peculiarly grave and learned.

"Well, well, Doctor, we will not quarrel about words; I will see what I can do, and then we shall know each other better."

This reply appeared to have pleased the Doctor; he said nothing, but joined the intellectual magnates, whilst I stood moodily gazing out of the window. Shortly afterwards, a little man with a large moustache touched me on the elbow, whom I at once recognised as Monsieur La Fishe.

"Good morning, sir," said the foreigner; "I hope you like this place well."

"It looks very nice *here*," I replied, pointing to the garden.

The foreigner glanced at me with a smile, and pulled his nose ; then twirled the hair on the upper lip.

"Do you teach gymnastics?" he whispered, covertly.

"Certainly not !" I indignantly replied.

The foreigner still turned the hair of his moustache, looking at me pitifully.

"Your predecessor did, poor fellow ! I expect you will."

"I certainly shall not, sir. Dr. Blinkhum engaged me to teach classics and mathematics only."

I felt and showed that I was vexed. My companion saw that and smiled. In an under tone he observed :

"The Doctor puts everything that is mechanical or physical under the head of mathematics."

La Fishe gazed at me again still more mournfully. Shrugging his shoulders, he gave a leering indignant grin, and approaching me, he whispered in my ear :

“He calls writing, you see, Monsieur, *Caligraphy*, eh! eh! eh!” La Fishe at that moment looked vicious. With a kind of maniacal grin, hitting his chest a terrific blow with his clenched fist, he uttered with his teeth fixed closely together—“Oh, the humbug!”

Our conversation was interrupted by the Doctor approaching us, and pulling out his watch, he looked at me—then hesitated—then bustled off, saying as he was leaving the room:

“That’ll be one of your jobs, Mr. Mason; but I’ll see about it for you in the morning.”

“What does he mean, Monsieur?”

“That you are to ring the bell every time it should be rung.”

Monsieur La Fishe shrugged his shoulders, and was again about to speak, when the expected sound of the bell was heard, and all the Masters hastened to their respective rooms, and I was soon formally introduced to the intellectual group, which composed

the Educational Establishment of Blinkhum Hall.

“Ring the bell !” sounded in my ears the whole of that long day.

CHAPTER X.

IF it be true that a play-ground is "*a world in miniature*," where you see congregated the most varied dispositions—wherein you discover that every one finds his level—intrinsically may we assume that the "School-room" is the great "*Nursery*" of a country, where you perceive in a more striking degree, the full development of those "traits of character," which there exhibit themselves in their more natural uncorrupted state. Observe the thoughtful, industrious boy, how particular he is in all his arrangements; how methodical in all his plans;

how he considers before he goes to his class, what books he wants, and how he selects them from his tidily-arranged shelf, and like a careful mechanic, when he sees he has all his tools, goes to his seat, and there in quietness sits down looking over his lessons.

But what's that noise yonder? What is the cause of all that hubbub there? It is a hot-headed boy, pushing his way through a number of others, that he may get to his class in time. Where are his books? He has none! He never thinks or dreams of books. His mind is too much occupied with play. He takes his seat by the side of the little student, and what a painful contrast is presented to the mind. The one, all absorbed in his lessons, assiduously engaged in construing some difficult passage in one of his favourite classical authors. The other, with head resting upon his elbow, and body lounging upon the desk, doing nothing. Doing nothing, did we say? yes, he is doing a great deal too much. His example will have its influence

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over the inclinations of some youngster, who, being formed in the same mould, requires only a copy which can be imitated, and as time goes on, he will probably become equal, if not superior, to his model.

How fatal are the *influences* of bad examples ! How valuable and powerful are the *influences* of sound, practical precepts !

The masters had now entered the school-room, where all was noise and confusion. After a short time, the boys had got settled in their places, when Mr. Slylook, the classical master, showed me what he was pleased to call "*my place*." It was nothing more than a "cut-about ricketty old desk," with a tottering, half-falling stool. I was doubtful whether it would be safe for me to deposit my "*corpus*" upon so frail a support, associating with the act, the possibility of my falling, stool and all, to the ground. I was soon relieved from this state of uncertainty, by finding myself surrounded with a large class of small boys, some of whom were very

patronising, overwhelming me with their polite offers of aid, and whilst they were thus attentive with their speech, leering at their companions, trying to deceive them with the erroneous idea that they had made me think that they were really anxious to assist me.

“*No catchination, boys,*” roared out a voice from the distance, whose echo ran along the walls of the room, and as it sounded nearer, vibrated in the air, and made the little fellows startle from their seats. Suddenly there appeared in the distance, the dark-shadowy outline of a figure, which, as it became more clearly visible, I at once recognised as that belonging to, and the exclusive property of, Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum.

“*No catchinatory ebullition* in this class,” again roared out the fatherly preceptor; “or I shall make a terrible example of some of you.” He continued grinding his teeth, in the most hungry manner. “Here,” addressing me, “give out these caligraphical books, will you.” Whereupon he forced rudely into

my hands, a number of dirty-covered common copy-books. How I could possibly know to whom these books belonged, was a mystery I could not remove ; so I stood with them in my hand, which the Doctor observing, he rushed towards me, snatching them from me, exclaiming—

“What! can’t you do that little job? Here, give ’em me, sir.” He honoured me with a savage grin, and departed.

I was only too glad to get rid of them ; and waited with patience for the next outbreak of coarse vulgarity, to torture still more my humiliated feelings.

The caligraphical lesson being finished, the Doctor bawled out in a most authoritative tone—

“Hem! The sixth mathematical form stand up,” whereupon there was an immense confusion among about a dozen of very small boys. Probably this confusion was caused by their attempting to perform some peculiar mathematical figure. Or more probable still,

the thunder-like noise of the voice of the Doctor startled them from their "propriety," causing them to rise more from the benumbing influence of fear, than from the powerful, natural impulse of duty.

"You'll all come this way to Mr. Mason," —the Doctor looked at me and giving me a strange kind of nod, shouted out to these 'modern Newtons'—"and sit down here. I have engaged Mr. Mason at an enormous expense to teach you mathematics, so don't let me hear a bad account of you, or I'll—!" He thumped the desk with his cane, and looked terrifically savage. "I hope, Mr. Mason, you'll let me know the name of any boy who will not pay attention, and I will make him remember it." The learned Doctor enhanced the impressiveness of his delivery, by giving the desk another furious strike, which caused the very inkstands to jump from their quietude.

Taking another fatherly survey of his *loving* pupils, he strutted off with consider-

able dignity to another quarter where he imagined his august presence was required.

The ludicrous nature of this scene, I must confess, amused me beyond measure. The assumption of this modern Aristarchus was more than I could have conceived possible for any *sane* man to have attempted, but it answered his purpose. It was the *means* to the *end* at which he aimed. As a teacher of youth he was "incapable" to convey any knowledge. He knew well enough that he could not display his intellectual superiority, and in order to impress his pupils' minds with some notion of his power, he saw it only remained for him to maintain his position by this physical demonstration.

He appeared formed to tyrannise over the smaller *fry* of the earth. His very look was sufficient to make the *boldest* amongst them quail and tremble. His voice, ever and anon heard,—not in the sweet, soft accents of a teacher, but rather in the coarse ribaldry of a bully. The tone showed the

“animus” of the man. The action described his natural character.

Well hast thou said, friend Thornton, “It was a *school* for those who *teach*, as for those who are taught.”

I was glad when the evening arrived, that I could have a few minutes to myself, to enable me to take a review of the varied duties of the day, which had been thrust upon me by the considerate Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum. The more I reflected upon the degradation of my position, the more disgusted I became with the ignorant presumption of the principal. I felt then, in an especial degree, the weight of my own littleness, the extent of my own humiliation. At that moment, too, I could have left the place altogether. My feelings were so lacerated by the coarseness of the Doctor’s conduct, that I had almost resolved to have resigned my situation at once, and start as an adventurer amid the rocks and quicksands of life, preferring rather the uncertainties of a pre-

carious state of existence, with independence of action, to the serfdom-like life which I was then enduring.

I was thus moodily ruminating upon my cheerless future, when I was joined by the French Professor.

"How do you do *now*?" he asked, with the same peculiar, mysterious look.

"Not very well—my head aches."

"Ah, Monsieur, your duties are hard; you'll never know what they are." He shrugged his shoulders, and sighed. "Yours, Monsieur, is an ungrateful office; you'll never be able to give satisfaction."

"How so—why not?"

"Your predecessor could not, although he worked hard enough. Poor fellow!" The Frenchman glanced at me. "He worked like a horse; yet the more he did, the less credit was given him."

La Fishe again looked earnestly at me.

"The Doctor is a strange man; you can never depend upon him." He mused abstractedly.

“How long was my predecessor with him?”

“Nearly two years.”

“Why did he leave?”

“Because he”—The little Professor of French paused suddenly; I saw he was greatly moved at the remembrance of his late colleague. His agitation was intensely painful; I had touched upon a chord which, more than any other, evoked the most distasteful associations—vibrating to music, which was, to his excitable temperament, extremely in-harmonious. My mind instinctively reverted back to the “scene” in my bed-room on the preceding night. That there was *something* of a peculiar, strange nature, in connection with the name or position of my predecessor, I was now most firmly convinced. What that *something* was I knew not; now was the opportunity which appeared favourable for its thorough investigation. Now was the time which would admit of my questioning him upon the subject. My curiosity was aroused,

and nothing but the ascertainment of the real facts of this "*incidental mystery*" would appease its demands, or satisfy its reasonable expectations.

"Was my predecessor a favourite with the boys?"

"He was with everybody," the French master sighed; "he couldn't be otherwise—he was so willing and good-hearted."

"Did the Doctor like him?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because the boys did," bitterly replied the Frenchman.

"How did the Doctor treat him?"

"At first, very well," replied the excited foreigner; "afterwards, like a brute."

"What caused the Doctor to behave so differently?"

"Because he couldn't do so much at last as at first."

"Was he not strong?"

"When he came here first," replied Mons.

La Fishe, with a trembling curve of the upper lip, "he was as strong and as fine a looking man as you'd see; but the Doctor soon found out something or other about him, and then he treated him more like a dog than a Christian." The Frenchman bit his lips with mental agony.

"What did the Doctor discover?" I inquired, perceiving that the French Professor was overcome with grief. "How could he ascertain anything of a private nature about him?"

"The Doctor is a villain!" sharply retorted La Fishe, who paced the room like a madman; "he would break the heart of any one who has a spark of pride or spirit in him."

"Have you quarrelled with him?"

"*Quarrelled* with him!" sneered the little Professor; "always quarrelling. I have wanted to leave a dozen times, but I can't get away."

"How does he prevent you?"

"He knows I suit him very well, and that

I don't want to *stay*; and so, to make me do so, he will never pay me the whole of my money." The little Frenchman grinned savagely. "He once locked me up in his study, and wouldn't let me get out?"

"Why not?"

"Because I threatened him to leave, the moment I did so."

"How did you act when you were liberated?"

"I was a little cool then, and the Doctor knew that your predecessor and I were very thick; so the cunning old fox wheedled round this poor fellow, and got him to speak to me, to advise me not to leave."

"Which he did, Monsieur?" I gently replied.

"Yes, poor fellow! but that was the ruin of him." The Professor put his hands in his pockets, and whistling the "*Marsellaise*," paced up and down the room. "The Doctor saw his weak points," he resumed, "and took advantage of them." The Professor

again paced the room, whistling the same tune. "It's all very well," he again remarked, "so long as the Doctor can get anything out of us. Then he'll condescend to be agreeable." La Fishe was becoming more excited. There was a determined sullenness of look in his features, that indicated the existence of the slow, smouldering embers of revenge within his bosom. He sprung forward, with his hands extended, like a wild, savage animal, dashing upon its prey. "Oh! Monsieur," he ejaculated, "I hope you'll not regret coming here."

"Why should I?"

"You don't know the Doctor *yet*." He shrugged his shoulders. "Your predecessor didn't understand him at all."

"I don't wish, Monsieur, to know much more of him than I do now. I shall try and do my duty whilst I am here."

"But he'll know something of *you*," interrupted my friend.

"I don't suppose he will, Monsieur," I replied.

"He will though, Monsieur," returned the Professor, looking at me compassionately. "You don't know his tricks yet; wait a little, and you'll see." He gave a complete *yell*, and ground his teeth with malicious spleen. Looking at me again somewhat calmly, he inquired in a half-hesitating, faltering tone—

"Do you ever have any letters?"

"Yes, frequently," I innocently replied; "I expect two or three every day."

"Oh," ejaculated the Professor, knitting his brow, and with fist clenched hard and firm giving the wall an awful thump. "I would not have them addressed here, if I were you."

"What is the objection? has the Doctor any?"

"Not at all," grinned the Frenchman; "he likes it."

"Then what's the harm?"

"None to him. It's what he wants." The Professor's eyes gleamed with fury.

“He’ll soon find out all about your family, and all those sort of secrets.” The Frenchman again shook with indignation. “Then it’s all up with you here.” He continued to fix his flashing eye upon me, as though I could guess at his meaning. “Don’t you, Monsieur,” he continued, “have any family letters sent here ; take my advice and be cautious.” The little Professor looked disgusted at the recollection of some peccalient act of the learned Doctor’s, which directly bore upon the subject matter of our present conversation. “It ruined your predecessor, Monsieur,” he added with a mournful sigh.

“In what way ?”

“The Doctor discovered one or two things about him and his connexions which caused the Doctor to act very differently towards him ever afterwards,” replied the Frenchman with bitterness.

“What did he discover, and how ?”

“That he was *poor*,” feelingly replied La Fishe ; “that he was the support of a

widowed mother, and an imbecile sister." Poor La Fishe groaned heavily, he was too much unnerved for me to ask him any more questions upon this painfully exciting subject. We were about to leave each other, when he grasped my hand convulsively, and the big tear of sympathy was rolling truant down his tawny cheeks, when with an outburst of grief that appeared, by its unusual violence, to upheave the very foundation of his whole system, he madly exclaimed—

"Ah! Monsieur, I hope you'll leave here before you find out any of the dirty tricks of the Doctor. Don't let your letters come here, or you're ruined." Then coming very close to me, he said, "That Doctor is a rascal. He was the death of your predecessor. Oh! the rascal!"

Before I could say another word, or recover from the effects of this miserable announcement, La Fishe was off, and I was once more alone!

CHAPTER XI.

DocTOR Theophilus Blinkhum, of Blinkhum Hall, was, as I have before informed my readers, "*a small man*," and therefore in his own estimation an extraordinary one. Indeed it is somewhat remarkable that little men generally consider themselves of a superior nature to other men. Whether this is a weakness which originates from their deficiency in stature, being more counterbalanced by the possession of a greater amount of conceit, is a problem, the solution of which we must leave to those physiologists to determine, who consider more deeply, under-

stand more accurately this very intricate branch of science. Certain it is, that Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum belonged to this branch of the great human family. Whether he was extraordinary because he was small, or small because he was extraordinary, are questions we cannot at present enter into. We simply give the fact, and proceed onward on our fugitive course.

Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum, was one of Nature's modest offsprings, who would not stop at anything. He never saw an impossibility; and hence he accomplished many things, which the cautious, timid reasoner would never dream of attempting. We think the little Doctor's history will be found both interesting and instructive, and we hope it may also be suggestive. We shall therefore endeavour to give a short outline of his eventful life, hoping the reader will not be disappointed in its perusal.

Report, with her many tongued attendants, asserts, "That in a small village in the north,

was a charity school, which was open for the reception of children, whose friends were able to pay a small weekly gratuity for the support of the school. It was considered superior to the class of charity schools in the neighbourhood. Its reputation stood high, for giving the boys a good, plain, useful education, and at the time we are speaking, it numbered more than 150 scholars. There were three masters, all of whom were respected by the parents, and valued for their services by the patrons, and supporters of the school. One of these masters was distinguished from the rest, for his great perseverance. He would take every opportunity to force himself upon the notice of the opulent in the neighbourhood. He was very ready to offer his services in any capacity, most willing to do anything that was required. He was a sort of "*busy-body*" of the village—he knew every one's affairs—he was acquainted with everybody's business. Such a man in a small village is generally a

“*great man.*” There’s nothing done in the village, nothing transpires there without his name being closely connected with it. Such, then, at this period was the “*status*” of one of the assistant teachers in this obscure country parish. It so happened that one of the most liberal patrons of the school was a nobleman who lived in the neighbourhood, and who was moreover the president of a society, which had been recently formed for the purpose of opposing the progress, by some counter demonstration, of the dangerous doctrine of “*Fuddlism.*” It was accordingly resolved by this society, to engage some person to go about the country, and combat with these insidious destroyers of the pure morality of the poorer people. The society required the services of a man rather distinguished for ability, to oppose in the simple peculiar language of the working classes, than one, who possessed a refined mind, or a very cultivated understanding. They wanted a person, who, whilst he understood the nature of these

doctrines, could bring to bear a tolerable amount of general local knowledge, to illustrate his opinions, and support his views of the subject. They required an advocate, whose confidence in himself was great; who would not be easily disheartened by any temporary defeat; who was persevering, energetic, determined, resolute, and patient. The selection of such a candidate was left in the hands of the noble president of the society.

The indomitable assistant soon heard of this movement, and very soon got it made known to his Lordship, "that there was no man in England who could compete with so much success against these modern infidels, who was more zealous, who could be more willing to sacrifice all he possessed for so noble a cause, than the assistant master of the village school." His Lordship was pleased with this information, and placed himself in communication with parties who would be able to give him the necessary information

regarding the character and general qualifications of the assistant master. His Lordship's inquiries being favourable, he intimated his wish to have an interview with the school assistant. The plausibility of this man completely pre-induced his Lordship to give him the appointment; he was at once installed as the opponent of Fuddlism; and received from his Lordship full power to carry out the intentions of the society. The obscure country school assistant saw in this success the embryo of his future fame; he was at once sent into the manufacturing district, where the pernicious doctrines of Fuddlism had been most extensively propagated. *Here*, he had full scope to display, not only his talents, but his tact and forethought in his opposition; *here*, he would have ample opportunities of testing his own skill and ability. In this arena of discussion, he found arrayed against him much *real* talent, mystified with all kinds of sophistry and subtlety, which formed the basis of the principles

of Fuddlism. This at the first overpowered our advocate's self-confidence ; he soon, however, found it necessary to change his course of attack ; and by becoming the pseudo-intellectual bully, instead of the cool reasoner, he obtained more converts and greater credit than in his original purpose. This is not remarkable, when we take into consideration the "material" which composed his audience ; when we recollect that they were ignorant men, who took for eloquence and argument, what was more in character with their own ideas of the object of reasoning ; hence the boisterous demagogue would gain a firmer footing amongst them, than the polished advocate ; hence, to conquer your foe, you must use the same cudgels which he has wielded with success.

Having continued for about two years in this itinerant vocation, the village assistant discovered that the people had begun to perceive the absurdity of the views and

principles of Fuddlism; and in consequence, all the once formidable pretensions of this sect had dwindled into utter insignificance. The village schoolmaster took to himself the lion's share of the credit for such a pleasing change; he would not concede any to the sober-minded, common-sense portion of the community. He had accomplished everything; had he not been selected as the opponent of this demoralizing sect, they would have been more numerous than ever. He had crushed them; his eloquence had alone convinced, his advocacy had alone annihilated; hence the village schoolmaster increased in importance as he saw the prostrate foe lying before him, inert and lifeless; he naturally made his character as opponent of a dangerous doctrine, the vehicle for advocating his own future progress in life—he was the moving advertisement of his own future destiny, a living specimen of a remarkable man.

His personal plans were soon matured. He had well studied the characters of the good-

hearted and hospitable people among whom he had been thrown ; and he saw that by them he could commence the “ nucleus ” of his important future. He had observed that these manufacturers were generally men of large families ! They would require education for their sons ! Whom would they select as their instructor ? Was it not more than probable that they would prefer some one for the office whom they knew—of whose abilities they had some evidence ? Had they not abundant proof of HIS wonderful talent ? Did they not think him an extraordinary—a clever man ? Had they not presented him with a substantial mark of their high estimation of his talents ? Would they not patronize him ? Would he not be able to command their support ? enlist in his behalf their interests ? secure their good opinion ? obtain their recommendation ? It was an experiment worth trying ! The nail was hot ; now’s the time to strike it, hard ! Associations of past exertions were vividly painted upon their

recollections ; now's the moment for the commencement of the grand experiment. There's a witchery in the present hour ! The excitement has not subsided. The mental appetite has not been over-loaded. It will bear a little more. It must be drawn into another channel. It must be made subsidiary to that *end* whose beginning is getting more visible ! It must be the instrument, the means for carrying out his ulterior views. He must at once establish himself in something which will secure all these great results ! Delays are dangerous. When, lo ! what is exhibited ? What do their bewildered vision see before them ?—

“ BLINKHUM HALL ;

“ Established for the Education of One
Hundred Pupils !

“ Principal—Dr. Theophilus Blinkhum, the successful opponent of Fuddlism, through whose untiring advocacy the dangerous principles of this demoralizing sect have been completely annihilated ! ”

“The principal will be assisted by gentlemen of acknowledged talent and repute. They will be ‘Double first’ of each University. Terms, according to age; the minimum is fixed at 50 guineas per year! The domestic arrangements will be upon the most liberal scale, and under the direct superintendence of Mrs. Blinkhum!”

How the village assistant schoolmaster became so suddenly converted into a real living Doctor, will doubtless amuse the learned, and prove interesting to those who are unacquainted with the facilities which are presented to the aspiring mind to be transformed into, and for ever to be styled, “Doctor.”

The village assistant schoolmaster, when known as plain Mr. Blinkhum, we have seen, was then a *modest man*. There is no question about that. Retiring in his habits, bashful in his pretensions, unassuming in his manners,—all these, and many other sterling qualifications, he possessed. Or rather, we *must say*, HE thought he had

them ; which, to his *unpretending mind*, was one and the same thing. An unexpected success, the gossips of the day say, makes people proud. It surely was not so with our friend ! His success amongst the “Fuddlites” was complete. Who shall dare to state that it influenced his general conduct ? It was notorious as the great event of the day. Who shall venture to assert that it made him at all ambitious ? Its effects were as transcendently glaring as the full mid-day sun ! Who shall presume for a moment to state that it made him more aspiring after fame—or more desirous to create a sensation which he could use to his own individual favour ? All these hypotheses are imaginary. They are not substantiated by current events. Too mythical for a *moment's* thought ; too whimsical for a *minute's* serious consideration !

Let us at once come to the real undisguised facts, and by them let us do full

justice to our friend,—then plain Mr. Blinkhum. We have said that his name had acquired a national importance. Moreover, his great renown had penetrated the gloomy sanctum of the University of “*Lazin-back*,” whose professors, from time immemorial, have been distinguished for their “love of money” and “*tobacco*.” Even these learned men felt an interest in our friend’s future prospects, and deputed their agent in London to offer him the honorary degree of LL.D., upon his remitting to them the *trifling* sum of £30 ! This was an intellectual boon which could not be resisted. The country schoolmaster accepted this high consideration of their appreciation of his merits. He at once transmitted to them his “*curriculum vitæ*,” with the small sum required, and they returned him a “diploma,” written in barbarous Latin ; the dirty parchment being strongly impregnated with the fumes of that sweet narcotic, which is almost the “*summum bonum*” of their sublunary bliss !

It appears that most of the German Universities are very ancient, and *very* poor; that in order to fill their empty coffers, they send over to England delegates as their representatives, to whom are given the power and authority of *selling* their various degrees to *any* one who has money enough to throw away for such an intellectual bauble, or ambition sufficient to crave after this purchased honour !

The Germans knowing the weak points of their insular friends, soon discovered that *we* English were fond of having some distinctive mark of recognised talent attached to our names ; and hence they had a large sale of, and a great demand for, these "*supererogated degrees.*" *Doctors*, of various sorts and kinds, sprung up in every direction. The ignorant adventurer was by the talismanic wand of the German University Agent, converted into *the Doctor!* Without prejudging the pretensions of plain Mr. Blinkhum—the assistant in the village school—we shall only, at

present, add, that it was in this way, and by these means, he came forth to the world full blown, as "*Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum.*" His antecedents will assist us in forming an estimate of his claims to the title; and we shall perceive as we proceed, whether his after career does in any way, and to what extent, justify us in designating him as one who was worthy of, and who did honour to, this *honourable* title.

We now behold a marvellous change, a complete transformation of the outer man; he was no longer the unrecognised, plain Mr. Blinkhum,—but the real, important, Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum. He assumed the grave, ascetic attire of a learned man, the modest garb of rusty drab was thrown aside; and the sage-like spectacles were mounted in its stead, denoting talent and consequence. There was a gravity in his very step, there was profundity in his look; and, oh! that *smile*,—how it indicated condescension to the poor, weak, unlettered

mortals with whom he was in the daily habit of coming in contact ! What a metamorphosis ! what conjuration ! what reality ! What's in a name ? asked our great dramatist, and negatively he answered it. We also join issue with the *sweet bard of Avon*, and say, "Nothing,"—nothing in fact, although much in reality.

The euphonious title of "Doctor" struck a degree of awe and veneration into the hearts of the simple-minded manufacturers ; they now looked upon the advocate of their cause as a great man, who was entitled to their respect, who had a direct claim upon their support. Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum was the "Alpha and Omega" of their thoughts, desires, and inclinations. They felt proud in associating themselves with the name of a Doctor ! that he was *their* friend, still anxious to serve them, though in a different sphere ; that he would be most happy to educate their sons, pay the strictest attention to their morals, do everything for them which could

be done, have a paternal regard for their present and future welfare.

Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum's success was beyond his own modest expectation ; he found himself, at the end of a year, the principal of a school which numbered *more* than a hundred pupils.

It was about five years from this time that I first had the honour of his acquaintance ; the particulars of our meeting have been recorded ; and it will be my pleasing office to carry along with me the good-humoured patience of my readers, until I have *unfolded my tale*, and given them sufficient food for their mental digestion, to enable them to arrive at some just conclusions upon a subject so deeply interesting and important to every well-wisher of his country.

En passant, we may observe that of Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum's abilities as a *scholar*, we shall not at present descant. We may be permitted to remark, that in all which he did, there was a strong admixture

of the designing, scheming, calculating man of the world ; nothing was done by halves, it was the whole or none. The secret of his success was rather in his ability to *govern* than in his capacity to *teach* ; he had secured the services of men of talent and experience, some of whom were obsequious from necessity, who, probably for their own convenience, pandered to his whims, making him believe that they were admirers of his talent and character, who were only *biding* their time to let him know the contemptible 'light in which they viewed his pretensions. The Doctor was blind to this visible fact, though so palpable to the most casual observer ; he was so inflated with the pompous ideas of his own importance, that he could not perceive the ridicule which was excited by his egotistical assumption, in the minds of those who were professing to serve him.

The Doctor had acquired from these men certain notions of teaching, which he exercised to support his power and increase his

influence. The lessons he had also learnt in the arena of discussion had made him astute and cunning in all his actions towards others. The Doctor's province was *to rule*; an occasional exhibition of his power generated among the junior part of his establishment a feeling of awe and dread. His walking around the class-rooms, he considered, was of more value than devoting hours to the labours of instruction. *Hence he never took a class!* His was the great master mind, which regulated the entire machinery of the huge intellectual engine. In order to attract and astonish, he introduced new names and absurd notions into every branch of teaching. He aspired to make his system the grand development of the long desired perfectibility of this noble science.

Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum had studied human nature well enough to discover its weak side. He knew from experience, how the illiterate were captivated with high-sounding names, unmeaning "gew-gaws"

of the conceited brain; and, knowing this *great fact*, he had profited by the credulity of the ignorant, in erecting upon it a large and flourishing school.

CHAPTER XII.

It seems strange to the unobservant in this matter of fact, utilitarian age, how some men are successful in their plans, whilst others with the same (or even greater) outward advantages, *fail*. Now, if we closely *analyse* the two characters, we shall easily discover a vast difference! The one, probably, is *modest, reserved, talented*, yet *he does not succeed*. The other is *ignorant, bold, confident* and *assuming*, and he *meets with success*.

This anomaly is easily cleared up, when we take into account the state of society. Its *artificiality* is apparent in every grade and

walk of life. We observe it equally in the saloon of the most wealthy, as amongst the *lordly* menials of his establishment. There is the same kind of *unreal*, unsubstantial enjoyment. None are satisfied with the means at their command for conferring on themselves real happiness; and hence they are *displeased, dissatisfied* with their position. There appears a natural tendency in the human mind, to grumble at every condition of life. We pant after some imaginary goal, where we expect to find greater happiness. No sooner, however, do we approach the long desired boundaries of our ambition, than we feel disappointed because it so nearly resembles, in every particular, our present state.

Thus our whimsicalities create the most unnatural appetites, bringing into existence a multitude of desires which it is impossible to satisfy, completely changing the whole face of society. The oddities of the fastidious beget strange, unheard-of inconsistencies,

sinking man into a state of degeneracy which no earthly power can remedy.

Hence, we may assume that man of the present day is *selfish, morbid, artificial*, always pining after the *impossible*, never content with the *real*; ever languishing for fresh incentives to minister to his depraved, fickle inclinations, never happy with the possession of the substantial means for securing happiness and health; ever longing and thirsting after some "*ignis fatuus*" which appears to *haunt* and *decoy him* into all sorts of *quagmires*, adding to his excited brain, the fiery fuel of restless disappointment, causing him to fancy that in everything he sees, there is nothing save the "demon of despair."

Therefore it appears that the great secret, which all of us ought to know who wish to advance in our several vocations, is, to read aright the characters of the persons with whom we come more directly in contact, from whom we expect some favour or benefit. Having learnt this valuable lesson, to act up

to it in all we do, or think, or say; let it be the grand moving principle of our life, its effects visible in our attention to all the little crotchets of the whimsical. *Then* we shall be thought worthy to be encouraged—*then* we shall be well patronized—*then* we shall be considered valuable members of society—*then* we shall find, to our great comfort, that through our own good tact and judgment we have realized a handsome competence, to sustain in independence and ease ourselves and kin, throughout the remainder of our existence. *This* is the golden rule of life of the present age; *this* will soon lead to the “*El Dorado*” of our hopes and fondest anticipations.

Hence, a man who wishes to succeed in life, must accommodate his views to this state of things, or he will never get on or thrive in his undertakings. Let him try to exist in his trade or by his profession, by a *passive* course; and he will soon discover that he is distanced by his more *bustling*,

energetic neighbour. He must move with the stream, and put into his actions an artificial growth, keeping pace with the times.

In this age, amiability of disposition is doubtless an excellent quality for our own fireside, or our friend's drawing-room, but it will not suit the present views of business ; our motto must be, "*Puff, puff, puff*;" and in proportion to the extent we carry out this theory, will depend our realization of wealth.

Probably no one knew so well this great truism—and no one could act better in accordance with it, than our friend Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum ; it was the one *grand*, vital, actuating principle, upon which he had staked his adventure. Let us again follow him in his track, and see how he fulfils the office he has chosen, whether he will merit in his own *good* and *saintly* person, the *grandiloquent cognomen* of the "Prince of *Schoolmasters* ; or, the "Prince of *Humbugs* !"

Resuming the thread of our narrative, I

may observe that, for the first month, the Doctor and I had frequent sparrings, always upon subjects so absurd in themselves, that it seems almost too much to impose upon my reader's time, whilst I describe some of them. Thinking, however, that I am bound to do so in justice to the character of the principal of Blinkhum Hall, I shall waive all delicacy of motive, and at once favour the reader with a specimen or two of our intellectual broils.

Upon one occasion Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum sent me another class of very small boys, to teach them "*mathematics*." They all looked—first at me, then at each other, as though they wished to speak, but were doubtful whether I would allow them the privilege of doing so. Seeing their impatience, I at length asked a chubby, round-faced little fellow—

"What work can you do? what have you been *reading*?" alluding to their mathematical course.

“If you please, sir,” answered a dozen or more of these young Newtons in a tremulous voice, “we *read* the History of England, sir;” then, getting more confidence and answering in a louder tone—“but this is the *ciphering* hour, if you please, sir.”

“Ah, yes, very well; let me see, then, what work you are doing,” checking myself as regards my mathematical terms. “I suppose you have done Fractions?”

I was stopped by the little fellows crowding round me, and shouting out in the same breath—

“Oh no, sir, we don’t do them yet, sir; the top class are only doing them, sir, we are in Compound Addition, sir, except this boy here, and he is doing Reduction, sir.”

“Many were the glances of admiration which were at that moment cast at “*this boy here;*” he was a kind of hero, every one thought him so *clever*.

The noise caused by these young mathematicians attracted the attention of the little

man, who came walking, or rather running down the room, all eyes intently fixed upon him, muttering to himself.

“What ebullition is this? what noise is this? Mr. Mason, why do you allow such a disgraceful disturbance? why such a shocking, scandalous exhibition?” Whereupon he gave the desk an awful rap with his formidable cane; and honoured me with—oh, such a look! “Tell me the name of the boy, sir, who has caused this uproar,” again he savagely scowled at me; “what does it all mean, Mr. Mason, can’t you keep these *babies* quiet, sir, or do you want me to come and set them right for you?” sneered the Doctor, whose enraged looks struck terror into the palpitating hearts of these young tyros.

“Not knowing to what extent they had worked,” I replied, smarting under the coarse remark of the Doctor, “I was simply inquiring of them what they had been *reading*.”

“*Reading, sir,*” shouted out the irate principal; “reading, sir, what have you to do

with *reading*, sir? This is not the hour for *reading*. It is the *mathematical hour*." Like the frog in the fable, the Doctor looked big, puffed out with the importance of his conceptions, and glared at me.

"Exactly so," I replied; "I used the word *reading*, as applied to mathematical studies."

"I tell you again, sir," roared out the principal, whose face was blue from rage, "they have nothing to do with *reading*. It is their *mathematical hour*, sir." He grinned, and savagely blew his nose, looking around to see that all of his pupils were intent upon what he was saying. He again looked at me, and with a malicious sneer, bawled out—

"If, sir, you don't know what I mean by *mathematics*, perhaps you will better understand me, if I call it *ciphering*, sir." Again he shook his head, looked around him, and grinned.

"If, as a general rule, you call the elementary rules of common arithmetic, mathema-

tics, sir," I replied, cool and collectedly—"then I must acknowledge I did not understand you."

"Oh!" sneered the principal, grinning more hideously. "Then they are not part and parcel of mathematics? Eh! Mr. Mason?"

"That I do not deny, but they are generally considered rather as the initiative to that science, than as a part of it."

The Doctor was about to speak, but I felt so dreadfully annoyed at his extremely cynic snarling manner, that I prevented him by saying, with more than my usual calmness, "I think, sir, *that* man must be a madman who would apply the term mathematics to these simple elements of arithmetic."

The Doctor was silenced; he twisted and twirled his body about as though he were smarting under some corporeal castigation.

"*Very well*, [Mr. Mason," he shortly added; "very well, sir, I am quite satisfied, sir, for the *present*."

The Doctor strutted about the room in the

greatest state of apparent excitement, grinning and muttering to himself, then giving me an evil look, which forebode another explosion upon some more fitting opportunity.

It was impossible to conceal this *emeute* under a bushel! The pupils were standing up, some on the desks, others on the forms, listening to the edifying wrangle that was going on betwixt us. The elder boys were more particularly amused at the gesticulations of their *revered* principal. At the end of the "fray," one of them, bolder than the rest, ventured to *laugh* so loudly, and with so much *character* in its *tone*, that it attracted the notice of the crest-fallen principal, who turned round with the ferocity of a savage, and demanded the name of the boy who had dared to interrupt the silence of the school by that vulgar, insulting laugh. There was an awful pause—many knew the culprit, none would come forward to gratify the revengeful request of their fatherly preceptor.

The Doctor, finding he was foiled in his views, roared out—

“Let every one of you be seated, and don’t let me find a boy out of his place until I know who it was who made the noise just now. Gentlemen,” he continued, turning to his masters, “you’ll all be pleased to have an eye upon ’em;” then raising his voice, flourishing his cane, and *looking* at his obedient pupils, he proceeded, “we’ll soon put a stop to this insubordinate spirit rising amongst ’em, because,” he added, casting at *me* a most fiendish grin, “*because* one of my *junior*”—he sneered at me; “*because* one of my *junior* assistants has forgotten the respect that is due to *me* from all my masters,” he again brandished in the air his cane, “a *respect*, gentlemen, that I have had paid me by some of the greatest of our nobility.”

The Doctor honoured me with another of his *peculiar* looks, and before I could reply in any way, he strutted off with much dignity, leaving his refractory pupils to the tender care of Mr. Slylook and others.

The moment the Doctor had left, there was a *hiccupped* kind of a laugh amongst the senior boys, also a relaxation of that terror-like silence which pervaded the juniors. Now, you could see here and there boys huddling closer and closer together, getting into a louder and more exciting conversation. They formed the great politicians of the Hall, and like their more matured namesakes, were discussing the merits of the question before them. Some thought I was an uncommon *plucky fellow*, as one of the elder boys rather loudly remarked; whilst others declared they had never seen such a *jolly spree*; whilst the third agreed it was a *capital joke*, and all considered it was *regular fun*. Of course all work was vanished, and this lesson *in suspen so* continued during the remainder of the morning.

As the hour for their usual dismissal had arrived, they were still in "durance vile." The seniors began to show signs of impatience, and make a "slight" noise; upon which Mr. Slylook, the Classical Professor, interposed his authority to check them, which

they did not in the least regard, except one or two, who were heard to whisper rather loud and deep—

“I say, what an old fool that Slylook is.”

“Ah! my boy,” was the reply, “he’s not like Mason, is he?”

“I should say de-ci-ded-ly not,” in imitation of Mr. Slylook’s way of drawling out his words, rejoined another.

“We shall see some fun yet, between Mason and little Filly.” Now we must inform our readers that “little Filly,” and “old Snuffy,” were the private names by which they distinguished the *great Doctor*.

“I’ll bet you what you like,” remarked another, “that Filly will give in first, Mason is a brick,” whereupon there was a most provoking laugh amongst the seniors. Mr. Slylook endeavoured to check it, which was the occasion for its repetition with a contemptuous, irritating sneer.

“I say,” continued the spokesman, “none of you will split when old Snuffy asks again; none

of you speak, don't tell him; he'll be in such a rage!" there was a silent compact between all to know nothing. "I say," he resumed, "pass it down to the other boys to be *mum*, and Palgrass says if any one tells old Snuffy, we'll serve him out."

These instructions were quickly passed from form to form, until they had gone the round of the school, which fact was communicated to the "whipper-in" by sundry telegraphical signs with the fingers from the "bugleman" of each desk. Having thus arranged their forces, the youthful belligerents waited with great composure the arrival of the enemy. They all appeared well armed, not with weapons of deadly strife, but with firmness of purpose not to yield to the threats or persuasions even of their principal.

A death-like pause ensues, the juniors flutter about their seats, like the feeble nestlings who have been deprived of the warmth of their feathered parent. The enemy was evidently moving. He was in their imme-

diate vicinity. The little ones, some nearly tumbling from their seats with fear, others shaking with dread, all nervous from terror, get closer together, hold faster by their tiny hands to the bottom of the form, and with their little legs dangling, sit or rather oscillate upon their forms in nervous suspense. Another intimation is given, that the enemy is very near—another anxious look to the end of the hall, and forthwith he appears, armed with his “*corporeal persuader*,” in his hand, together with an antique “skull cap” carelessly placed upon his learned head.

Approaching his classical master, with whom he conversed for some time in a low whisper, he turned towards the boys ; giving the desk near him rather a rough salute with his cane, he cried out—

“Silence there,—attention!”

The little fellows jumped from their seats, and with mouths half open looked at him with faces pale with fright, scarcely at that moment knowing whether they were stand-

ing on their heads or their heels. The elder ones, on the contrary, shewed a "*bold front*," passing to each other certain furtive glances, which intimated resolution and determination not to "yield an inch." This *oneness* of look amongst them appeared to say to each and all of them, "We don't intend to tell him, we'll all be firm."

The Doctor walked round the desks, looking searchingly at each boy's countenance, to see if there were any indication of guilt, or a participatory knowledge of the affair. It was in vain, their countenances were placid, stern and unflinching; he could detect nothing there. Again he returned to consult with his friend and confidential classical assistant, and once more called out in a most stentorian tone—

"Silence, no unseemly ebullition there!"

The same kind of death-like suspension of the respiratory organs of the "small ones" could be observed amongst them, from their sundry shudders, and startling from their

seats, at the sound of the melodious voice of their paternal substitute.

"I have given," he commenced, addressing the Trojan-like band of seniors; "sufficient time and opportunity for you to let me know the name of the boy who made that most unbecoming, ungentlemanly noise. I am determined, *yes*," grinding his teeth and looking at the seniors most unbenignly, several of whom, at that particular moment, had availed themselves of their pocket-handkerchief, either to use legitimately, and make more than an ordinary noise, or to conceal by its assistance their scarcely suppressed laughter. "*Yes*," he again repeated, with killing severity; "*yes*, I am determined to discover the offender." He again consulted Mr. Slylook, and then said—

"Let the boy who caused the interruption hold up his hand." The Doctor paused, and looked around him. He saw no hand held up. He again went to his factotum. There was a buzz of satisfaction throughout the

whole line of this "juvenile phalanx." They had achieved a victory—they were now waiting for the triumph.

Again the Doctor repeated the question; again all was silent.

"Then," said the little man, "I shall now ask you separately, upon *your honours*, whether you know anything about this affair."

With considerable gravity, and mysterious importance, he went to each boy, none of whom, as a matter of course, knew anything about it. The Doctor's face evidenced his chagrin. The result of his search had plainly galled him. He looked fiery, and gazed viciously, first at the senior boys, and then at *me*. Why I should be honoured with a look at such a moment, and of such a kind, were equally unintelligible to me *then*. He had another lengthened conversation with Mr. Slylook, and once more in tones of fatherly sympathy and sorrow, addressed his obedient pupils—

“I am quite shocked,” commenced the small man, “to find amongst you so great a desire to conceal from me, (who, as you all know, am placed over you in the room of your honoured parents,)” he gazed affectionately at his seniors, “things which in themselves are not of the slightest importance; but through your want of respect to me and my character,” here he paused, and gave *me* another chilling gaze,—“you have forced me to notice it, in a manner which is most painful to my own feelings,” again he stopped, and with a fatherly look glanced round the room. “I must say, my dear pupils, I am grieved at so much *equivocation*. It is a most serious thing to be guilty of equivocation,” again he eyed me rather suspiciously. “Equivocation, I have always told you, is worse than a *lie*! I would rather you did anything than equivocate,” he honoured me with a solemn gaze. “I know of late you have had not the most respectful examples set you.” He leered at me.

“Although,” he continued, addressing the senior boys, “I am quite satisfied with the explanation I have received.” At this moment there was an indignant murmur from the seniors, who, shaking their heads, could have told the Doctor, that no one had satisfied him! That he was acting diametrically opposite to his fatherly advice to them, and telling a most abominable —! We blush to state what he told, we will only say he did not utter the truth. He resumed his address—“These disagreeable exhibitions can do no good, they tend to shake my confidence in you, and when that is once done, you will compel me to treat you as charity children, instead of young gentlemen of honour and principle!” Again he paused, and cast an *ursine look* at me, as though he could squeeze out of this poor frail tabernacle of mine, all that was worth therein preserving. “You all know how my life and *talents* are devoted to you! How I work day and night for your good! How anxious

I am to promote your welfare here, as well as to secure your happiness hereafter !”

The little schoolmaster was exhausted; the effect of his own eloquence had prostrated his whole system. The next moment you could hear the voices of these rebels rend the air with acclamations. The seniors feeling disgusted at the mean attempt of the Doctor, in placing upon the shoulders of some imaginary pupil the black spot of a betrayer! They all knew there was too much honour amongst them to commit an offence of that nature. They all knew that the Doctor had been foiled, and they all were heartily glad that he was unable to discover the culprit.

The little fellows, too, now that they could breathe more freely, were rejoiced and amused at what they had seen, and probably would never forget the lesson they had that day learnt from their seniors.

The Doctor had retired into his study to contemplate, perhaps, upon the display he

had that day witnessed, as developing the principles which he was inculcating, and which were so faithfully imitated by the obedient pupils of Blinkhum Hall.

CHAPTER XIII.

THIS early specimen of the "sweets of my vocation" was not at all improved by the state of isolation in which I was placed for a considerable time after the event which has been recorded. The Doctor did not condescend to speak or notice me in any way. His instructions were given to Mr. Slylook, who communicated them to me. I was "sent to Coventry," as the school-boy would call it. With the exception of the Frenchman, none of the masters spoke to or noticed me; not that they did not do so from any personal dislike, or sympathy with the Doctor, but rather from

fear; some knew from painful experience that to notice any one whom the Doctor had *ostracised* was tantamount to their becoming a voluntary exile from all benefits, (clergy excepted,) which were presumed to be derivable from the friendship or conversation of the learned principal of Blinkhum Hall; unless they did and thought as the Doctor did and thought, they were no longer honoured with his favour, support, or patronage.

Our small supper-parties, too, where the rigidity of school-duty was thrown aside, and an agreeable kind of chit-chat generally substituted, were now marked with the same reserve. It is true that the conversation was general, perhaps more animated, but *I* was not noticed. *I* was the poor leprous victim, who was shunned, and spurned, and despised, on account of my deadly malady. The charitable were fearful to come to my aid. The great and important would not so much as cast one slight look of pity upon, or glance at, the unhappy castaway. I sat with the

most stoic indifference, listening to their edifying conversation, now and then hearing a most direct allusion to my unfortunate self. These stray shots of the Doctor's malice, although they did not wound, were galling in the extreme, and had it not been for the frolicsomeness of the Frenchman, I should have resented them in a manner probably neither gentlemanly nor delicate. However, the French professor's good-humoured face cheered me. He was as much excluded as myself, he gloried in the honour of such a *martyrdom*; he could be exceedingly teasing whenever he was disposed. It was extremely amusing to see him sitting at the supper-table, his small orbs twinkling and leering towards me. Then by way of an interlude making a horrid noise with a short, dry, husky sort of a cough, all the time looking as serious as a judge. In the middle of an animated discussion, when the Doctor would be more than usually eloquent, the Frenchman's voice could be heard more loud than

polite, shouting for some bread, or other adjunct; at the same time, to all appearance eating most ravenously. At another time he would be excessively nervous, and upset the "*salt*;" again the water-bottle would be overturned, or some similar mishap would occur upon most evenings, to the no small annoyance of the amiable and lawful spouse of the celebrated Doctor.

Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum had yet one important lesson to learn. However much he had studied human nature, he knew nothing of the character of boys. He treated them like so many machines which could be set in motion and stopped at his will. He considered them in the like of "automatons," motionless, without his conjuring hand was there to pull the string to bring them into action. He never imagined that school-boys were judges of what is right. He never dreamt that they were correct observers of the weak points of a man's character; that they could discern and appreciate a master's

qualifications, and would behave towards him in accordance with the estimate they had made of his pretensions. Dr. Theophilus Blinkhum never thought that the lessons of deceit and subterfuge which he had been, from the first, teaching them, were not only learnt well, but were operating upon their minds; making them, if possible, more cunning than their great model! He knew nothing of these great truths, and hence he was ignorant of the existence of those slumbering ashes of discontent and disgust, which had been, for so long a period, smouldering within the breasts of his *obedient pupils*.

The learned Doctor's treatment of me was the very thing his pupils desired. They had been waiting for an occasion to present itself, when they could teach the "*learned man*" a lesson, which would be more useful to him than many he had taught them. They wished to exhibit the full-bearing fruit from those seeds which he had sown in their minds. They had an over abundance now

ripe and ready for the sickle. They had longed for an event which would expedite its in-gathering.

From the first of my going to Blinkhum Hall, I was regarded by the senior boys with more than ordinary respect. There may be various causes assigned for this, but the most reasonable one arises from the fact, that Mr. Slylook was a person whom they did not respect. They had no confidence in him—viewing him in the odious light of a “*spy*.” They thought he did not act uprightly towards them—that he took every opportunity of conveying to Dr. Blinkhum the most garbled statements, and highly embellished accounts of things which they might have committed. Hence Mr. Slylook was very much hated by the pupils, and *very* highly valued by Dr. Theophilus Blinkhum.

It was at this particular period that I arrived. The senior boys perceiving that I was disposed to treat them honourably, and with strict impartiality, looked upon me in a

more favourable light than they did the classical friend of Doctor Blinkhum.

That boys will respect those only, who, without favouritism, administer the laws of a school, is an established fact, which even those of the Blinkhum school cannot deny. Boys are lovers of justice, and will cheerfully submit to any punishment if they know it to be deserved. A combination of boys in opposition to the arbitrary rule of a master will, in general, be successful; and hence boys will not silently acquiesce in the tyrannical conduct of a principal over his assistants. On this account, and for these reasons, they will respect the assistants, and despise the principal.

Probably such or similar feelings operated upon the minds of the seniors with regard to myself. They had heard the Doctor's insulting remarks, and they all doubtless felt indignant at the author of them. The period had at length arrived when they purposed to awaken the self-complacent mind

of the learned Doctor to a proper estimate of his intrinsic worth—when they intended to astonish, and it is to be hoped, to benefit and improve the judgment of their shepherd and guide.

For several days the boys had been in a most unsettled condition. The volcano was in a restless, agitated state. Its rumbling noise indicated that an eruption was not far distant. Its low, roaring sounds were more frequent and less feeble. It was getting too hot to remain within its present boundaries. It was expanding. Its explosive properties are upon the eve of bursting forth. Its upheaving becomes more apparent. The red flashes of hot air show it is now making a last effort to release itself from all further restraint. One more struggle, and all is over!

“Hark! hush! What a strange noise, Mr. Slylook!” madly ejaculated the alarmed Doctor to his confidential assistant, as we were *all* assembled together in a room which looked

out upon the playground. "Mr. Slylook, what is that? Am I in a dream? Hark, Mr. Slylook!"

It was no dream, brave Dr. Theophilus Blinkhum! The volcano had sent forth its *lava* in burning words that no one could mistake.

"Let's give three more cheers for—Mason!" shouted, at the pitch of his stentorian voice, Mr. Palgrass, the most obedient and orderly pupil in Dr. Theophilus Blinkhum's numerous establishment.

The shouts were deafening. The continuous cheers of the pupils went through every crevice of our consulting room, and as lightning is supposed to be attracted by the best conductor near, so the electric fluid from these sounds did in an especial manner seize the whole body and mind of the principal. He was paralysed with amazement. He literally *roared* with vexation. He was choked with alarm. He stood for some minutes in breathless suspense, listening to

the shouts and uproar in the play-ground. It is no dream, Dr. Theophilus Blinkhum; but a tangible fact. There can be no doubt about it.

“Now then, let’s give three *groans* for the old sneak!” There never was, before or since, such an extraordinary combination of every conceivable sound of the “human,” “*canine*,” “*feline*,” “*vaccine*,” “*porcine*,” and all and every other “*cine*,” or kind of voices, co-mingled and harmoniously contributing each their quota to perfect the discordant noise which they were trying their best to make, as approaching nearest to what they intended to represent to all whom it may concern, and any one whom it may not concern, as a vulgar, unmistakeable, universal, perfect *groan*.

It was a thrilling sound—disdain, defiance, and contempt were everywhere heard, to the no small discomfort of the principal and his satellite. Indeed, the Doctor looked like one possessed. He was speechless from

rage! His face pale, his lips white and quivering; his whole frame shook with convulsive throbs from his agitated body. The noise of the rebels being more decided in its tone, and alarming in its appearances, induced the amiable wife of Doctor Blinkhum and her sister to come into our room, for the purpose of inquiring into the nature of this "noisy demonstration." They were soon told the awful tale! The consternation and woe depicted in the crest-fallen countenance of her spouse, informed her too plainly of the sad fact. She saw him in mental agony; she beheld him in bodily torture; she knew he was suffering intense pain from this unexpected exhibition! Scarcely had her good-humoured face assumed its wonted cheerfulness, when her ears were horrified at hearing the obedient pupils of her "*sire*" shout out, in a tone somewhat louder than a gentle whisper, the name of the master who had been snubbed by her spouse, and put into solemn stillness by herself. My

name was repeated, louder and more loud, by these rebel pupils ! And, as success often makes the timid bold, and the nervous courageous, so they became more daring and less respectful in their actions. They now approached the window of our room, and there stood brandishing in the air, incipient flags, which they had suddenly manufactured from their pocket-handkerchiefs and old cricket-stumps, or any and every sort or kind of stick which then came within their grasp. There these "obedient pupils" stood, waving these primitive-looking flags, and when exhausted they appeared, they resumed their "*peculiar groan*," even now, the little ones joining most lustily in the general chorus.

Mrs. Blinkhum honoured me with a look of profound scorn ; she flounced about the room in that "*peculiar*" way, which we have been told ladies generally do when they are *not* pleased. The Doctor could not move ; he was enraged and speechless. Mr. Sly-

look stood in mute astonishment. The little Frenchman rubbed his hands, and twirled his "moustaches," his little "peepers" laughing through this vista of gloom. There was a sorrowing gladness in his countenance, which contrasted strangely with the prostrated appearance of the others. I turned towards the window, to avoid the black, fiendish look of the maddened Doctor. No sooner, however, had I done so, than I was recognised by some of the ringleaders, and my name was again echoed in all directions from all parts of the youthful camp. This was really more than the Doctor could endure. He managed to regain his speech, and soon gave me the benefit of his eloquence.

"What does all this mean, Mr. Mason?" he inquired, fixing his dilated optics savagely upon me. "Is my establishment to be upset in this way by your trickery? What do you mean, sir?" he glared at me. "My establishment, sir, for young gentlemen of the

highest quality, which I have carried on with so much credit and satisfaction to all parties, now, sir, to be turned upside down, and *my* authority and power to be put to defiance! What does it mean, sir? Tell me, sir!" approaching me so closely that I had doubts if he were not about to commit an "assault with violence" upon my sacred person. "How dare you, sir, to be tampering with them, and by your wicked devices, corrupting the minds of my obedient and most orderly pupils?" He frothed at the mouth with excitement, and watched every muscular movement of my face, with the most demoniac pleasure. Not giving him an instantaneous reply, he roared out triumphantly—

"No reservation, sir! No reservation, sir! Let us have the whole of it, sir. It won't do to deceive *me*, sir!" He glanced at his classical friend. "I thought I was not far wrong;" he shook his head with awful solemnity. "I have guessed tolerably right.

I am not at all surprised. It is what I have been for a long time expecting ;” he looked wistfully at Mr. Slylook. “I’ll very soon put a stop to this.” He rivetted his gaze upon me with the most *lupine* delight.

“I am extremely sorry, Doctor Blinkhum,” I observed, “that my name has been mixed up with this most unfortunate affair. I am perfectly ignorant.” I was stopped by the Doctor, who exclaimed—

“It is a conspiracy, sir,—a foul conspiracy. I’ll soon discover who is at the bottom of it.” He gave me another of his fiendish grins. “Mr. Slylook, will you be kind enough to get them all in the great hall, that I may investigate the matter at once.”

Mr. Slylook was soon in the play-ground. Mr. Slylook would rather have been anywhere else. Upon his appearance, an ironical shout rent the air. He essayed several times to speak. The attempt was met with a universal shout of derision.

“You’ll all come in directly,” shouted, or rather squeezed out, Mr. Slylook.

“Who says so?” coolly inquired a dozen or more of the elder boys. Then another shout.

“I tell you to come into the hall,” again bawled out the classical master. “Doctor Blinkhum desires me to say he wishes you all to be there directly.”

“Who cares for you, or ——?” a stifled pause from the speaker, which resolved into another shout.

“Here, Dawkins, go and ring the bell,” said Mr. Slylook to one of the senior boys, who was nearest him.

“What did you say?” innocently inquired Dawkins, with a peculiar grin.

“I wish the old sneak may get it!” shouted several of these hopefuls, who had heard the request of Mr. Slylook.

“I tell you to ring the bell, Dawkins!” again there was another shout, and Mr. Dawkins walked off in an opposite direction.

Mr. Slylook finding no one would attend to his orders, thought it the wiser plan to execute them himself; accordingly he proceeded to the place where the bell-rope was suspended, when, upon his arrival there, to his very great surprise and annoyance, he found the *rope* had mysteriously disappeared. There were sundry exulting shouts, enlivened by a few hisses, interspersed with a general laughter.

Mr. Slylook said nothing. He hastened to the dining-hall, and informed the Doctor of this additional proof of his pupils' obedient dispositions.

The Doctor, like many other chivalrous heroes, was soon in the midst of his dangerous enemies; he braved their attack, he laughed at their weapons, he ridiculed their *pigmean* pretensions; *he would* soon show them the valueless nature of all their boasting, *he would* let them know whose authority they had put at defiance, *he would* teach

them submission, *he would* command their obedience.

Fury in his walk, bluster in his threats, and cowardice in his heart, Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum desired his pupils to leave the play-ground.

“What is this that I hear from Mr. Slylook?” he demanded with terrific gestures; “what am I to understand by this? All of you go into the hall directly.”

There was but little sign of any motion amongst them; some moved, or rather crawled along; others were beckoning to the more timid to follow their example and be bold and firm.

The Doctor was silently watching the manœuvres of these youth-like veterans. His patience was at length exhausted, he could not endure this tantalization from his pupils any longer; more incensed than ever, he cried out—

“Did you hear what I said?” looking at

the seniors ; “ am I to be obeyed or not ? what do you mean ? ” The seniors took it still very easily ; they marched off in slow pace to the hall, doubtless whispering *to themselves* various not over friendly epithets against the Doctor and Mr. Slylook.

Standing by the window, and musing upon the passing scene, I was aroused by the sudden appearance of the French master, who, upon approaching me, whispered—

“ Ah, Monsieur, it is capital, I do enjoy the fun ! ” he cast his eyes slyly towards me ; I saw in a moment that he was in great ecstacy at this *emeute* ; he came closer to me and said, in a low, half-laughing voice—

“ The Doctor is nearly mad with rage ! ” his little orbs were sparkling with excitement ; “ ah ! ah ! Monsieur, he says *you* shall leave *to-night* ; ah ! ah ! ”

“ Why ? ”

“ Ah ! ah ! Monsieur, the Doctor is jealous of *you* . ”

“ Why so ? ”

“He sees you are more respected by the boys than he is himself, that old Slylook is at the bottom of it,” the Frenchman’s brow was knitted when he spoke of the classical master ; “the boys hate him,” La Fishe continued, “and have been waiting a long time for an opportunity to have a row ;” he pirouetted about the room like a professor of calisthenics. Eh, eh ! is it not capital ? Oh, it is jolly fun ! I am so glad, it serves the old Doctor right.”

“I don’t know, Monsieur,” I remarked, “why he should be jealous of me ; I have done nothing to cause his pupils to make this demonstration. The fact is evident, Monsieur, there must be something radically wrong in his system ; I see clearly this popularising plan of education will neither make boys clever nor obedient.”

“Ah ! ah ! Monsieur, you are right,” the Frenchman twirled his moustaches and made an effort to look grave ; “the boys care no more for the Doctor than they do for the

bark of his dog ; they laugh at him, and he is always obliged to give in to them."

"Has such as this occurred before?"

"Lots of times, Monsieur ; he'll make a fuss and stir, and there it will end."

"This wretched state of things cannot last, Monsieur."

"The head boys know how to manage the Doctor," rejoined La Fishe. "If they want anything, and the Doctor refuses to let them have it, they *will not work*, but give all the trouble they can to the masters ; I have known this state of things to last for more than a week, until, at last, the Doctor was compelled to grant them what they demanded."

"Surely, Monsieur, this must be an absurd way of conducting a school."

"So it is ; but you see, all the boys know that the Doctor is an ignorant man, and they despise him." The Frenchman bit his lip with contempt. "I have heard some of the elder boys often say that he knows nothing

at all ; and, Monsieur, you must be aware that where there is only pretension to learning, without its real possession, there must be contempt and disrespect."

"I am convinced, Monsieur," I replied, "that there is far more discernment amongst boys than we are disposed to allow. Boys congregate to discuss the merits or demerits of the conduct of their superiors, with an accuracy of judgment that it would be well for others of maturer years, to imitate."

"Ah ! ah ! ah !" replied La Fishe, with another of his forcible attempts to look serious. "The Doctor knows he is looked upon by his senior pupils with distrust, and you'll see how all this squabble will end." The Frenchman threw his arms forward, beating the air. "The Doctor will bluster, and threaten to *expel* several of the leaders ; and then, after all, he will come round and give them an extra holiday, and all will again be quiet and agreeable."

"What a strange way of supporting his power!"

"He has no real power, Monsieur," ironically remarked La Fishe; "his influence is maintained by bullying the masters and threatening his boys."

"I don't see, Monsieur," I mournfully remarked, "much chance of my being comfortable here after this unpleasant affair."

"Oh, my dear fellow, these things are so common here we think nothing of them! The Doctor is in constant fear of the boys, and they know it, and that is the reason why they will have their way and do as they like."

We were interrupted in our conversation by the entrance of one of the little boys, who informed us that the Doctor *desired* the immediate presence of *all* the masters in the hall. Whereupon La Fishe, glancing at me with a "satirical smile," shrugged his shoulders, pulled his moustaches, and thrusting his arms forward with an additional effort to hit some imaginary object, he gave

his body an extra whirl, and most gracefully walked out of the room.

The issue of this "juvenile rebellion" was precisely as the Frenchman had predicated. The learned Doctor was at the first *very cross*, which made the elder boys *very merry*, and the little fellows *very sad*. He was overpowered, and full to the brim with his fatherly love for his obedient pupils. He considered they were most orderly and gentlemanly; he did not think there was any *harm* in what they had done, but he hoped for the future they would not give way to their natural youthful buoyancy of spirits. He was quite convinced of the great love and veneration they had for him, and all engaged in his establishment. He was certain they would not attempt anything of the kind again. He knew they were *young gentlemen* of the finest sense of honour and duty. Their general conduct being so exemplary, he should not think of

punishing them ; but in order to give them every opportunity and time for reflecting upon the dangerous course they were attempting to pursue, as well as to recreate themselves for the benefit of their health, and as an additional proof of his continued unaltered confidence in all their actions, and an earnest of his anxiety for their future welfare and happiness, he should have the greatest possible pleasure in giving them an extra—whole holiday!

“O, tempora ! O, mores !”

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE cannot be a greater mistake, one more suicidal to a man's future prospects in life, than that which is often committed by parents, in selecting professions or trades for their children, without taking into consideration the aptness of the child for that particular office or employment. The pride of ancestral associations most commonly induces the country squire to select one of his sons for the Church, another for the bar, and a third for the army. In either case the inclination of the son is seldom or rarely consulted ; probably the son who was the best fitted for the pulpit,

had been selected for the army. He, too, who would have done honour to the "wig and gown," has been forced to yield to parental injunction, and turn his mind to that which was quite inimical to his tastes. The writer knew a remarkable instance of this kind. A friend of his had been selected from the family group, as the son who was to enter the Church. He was sent to college for that purpose, and in due time took his degree, and was ordained. He soon found that he was in a wrong position. As a reader or preacher, he was very far below mediocrity; to a remarkably shrill, squeaking voice, he had the misfortune to have a peculiar cast in his eye, which made him appear to his auditory, as though he were always staring at them, in the most unclerical manner. He was painfully aware of his defect, and used to say to the writer—"I know the congregation would rather see any one else mount the pulpit than myself. I don't blame them, for I know I am a '*muff*' at preaching." Yet

this very "muff" of a preacher was a "perfect genius" in scientific pursuits. His engineering capabilities were of no ordinary kind. His whole heart seemed ever to be in his workshop, which he had made for his amusement; in which would be seen several regular sets of rails laid down, with Lilliputian steam-engines, tenders, and carriages, all at work. Everything there was made by his own hands, and most of the engines involved some new mechanical improvement! He said to the writer—"If I had been placed in the position of life which my inclinations naturally tended, I might have been a great man; now I am here a poor Curate, who must vegetate in obscurity all my life, without the slightest chance of ever getting beyond, or succeeding to any extent in the Church."

How many similar instances could the general reader bring to his mind from his own immediate circle of friends! How many men, too, are there engaged in various

other callings who are not fitted to perform their multifarious duties ! Alas ! how many —many adventurers are there existing in the present day, who have from some cause (which we will not now particularize) selected the *honourable* calling of a schoolmaster for a subsistence, who are not capable of keeping a “*dame’s school*,” bringing upon the profession and those meritorious workers in it, the contempt, derision, and ridicule of those of our race who are ever foremost in detecting the “ludicrousity,” in any shape or aspect, of our poor fallen human nature !

“When will the calling of a schoolmaster be properly appreciated in this country ?” I mentally bitterly ejaculated to myself.

This was a problem which I was attempting to solve, and was about to answer, when I was again interrupted in my dreamy views by the opportune appearance of the French master.

“Ah ! Monsieur,” he said, “you look dull. What is the matter ? Never mind these disagreeable exhibitions.”

“ I don’t know, Monsieur, how a man can be otherwise than dull, when he reflects upon the state of education in this country.”

“ I am of the same opinion, Monsieur ; and feel disgusted at such behaviour. I don’t wonder at men not becoming assistants, when they are treated as they are,” the French master snarled out. “ It is a perfect disgrace to your country to have such ignorant men heads of large schools.”

“ You are quite right, Monsieur ; though we cannot alter it.”

“ That is true, Monsieur,” replied La Fishe, “ but why not ? Why should such illiterate men be permitted to open a school ? In my country they would never be allowed to do so.” La Fishe’s face flushed with indignation. “ In England, the educator is thought less of than a common workman ; whilst upon the Continent he is looked upon as a friend, and worthy to enter the first society.”

“ So it should be in England,” I remarked ; “ and so it ought to be in every country where education is duly valued.”

“Why is it not so in England?”

“It is the fault rather of our government than of ourselves,” I replied; “there is no check put upon enterprise of any kind. Any ignorant man may set up a school in the very same way that another man may become a butcher or a grocer. We have no law to restrain or prevent any one from doing so.”

“Ah! I know not, Monsieur; it is not so with us. If any one opened a school without a licence from the Executive, he would be liable to fine and imprisonment.”

“And he richly deserves it, Monsieur,” I replied. “Here in England we have *quacks* of all kinds and degrees, but the most dangerous and contemptible of all “quacks” is the ignorant schoolmaster.”

“We have nothing of the kind upon the Continent. Our schoolmasters undergo an examination in whatever branch they choose to teach, and get a certificate for that only, and durst not instruct in any other.”

“That is as it should be,” I replied. “There

has been recently chartered a society which has in view similar objects, and I heartily wish it success."

"It will greatly benefit the profession, Monsieur, by giving the public a guarantee for the character and capabilities of its members."

"It will also give a more healthy tone to the profession," I remarked. "I wish its usefulness could be widely diffused throughout the length and breadth of our land, then we should soon perceive a wonderful difference in the position of our instructors."

"Ah! ah! it will be so in time. You must remove the strong prejudices of the interested and narrow-minded, before you can expect a society like this to be generally accepted." I found La Fishe had entered upon a subject in which he appeared to take considerable interest. "I am astonished," he continued, "at your country's blindness on this head; why don't they at once make the calling of an educator respectable, by sup-

porting the views and objects of this 'College of Preceptors?' "

"There's not much hope, I fear, Monsieur for so desirable a consummation," I replied ; "however anxious our government might be for extending the education of our people, the sectarian bitterness which pervades and influences the minds of a large portion of the community, will always retard and ultimately defeat their good intentions."

"Well, it does surprise me, Monsieur, that whilst you excel in almost everything, you should be so far behind us in this one great essential of a country's importance."

"It is too true, Monsieur, no one can deny it," I replied ; "it is a national disgrace, for, of all men who ought to be respected in a country, the educator of our youth should have the first place in our esteem."

"Ah ! Monsieur, you English will think so when it is too late."

"Much depends upon the parents of the children, Monsieur," I remarked. "If they

would reflect upon the future career of their son—that he receives the first grand principles of good or evil from the master, they would endeavour to ascertain his qualifications before they placed in his hands the important trust of training and forming the mental character of their child.”

“Why, Monsieur,” bitterly remarked La Fishe, “the parents in general are very illiterate. They cannot discriminate between the possession of real talent and its counterfeit. They think if a man talks well, he must be clever.” La Fishe saw the door was not closed, he went and fastened it, then proceeded—

“You must see, Mason, that this is the very reason why Doctor Blinkhum has met with such extraordinary success. The parents of his pupils are wealthy manufacturers, and very ignorant; many of them, when young, were poor men, working at the loom, and cannot even now write their own names. They thought the Doctor must be

very clever, because he used to talk so fast; and consequently they sent their sons to him, mistaking his garrulous twaddle for real ability and talent."

"It is surely time, Monsieur, that some measures were taken to disabuse the public mind of these pretenders," I remarked, feeling indignant that I was then so intimately associated with one of them.

"It will work its own cure, Monsieur. The English are always so occupied in business, that they cannot afford to think about anything, except it will bring money to their coffers."

"You take a right view of our national failing, Monsieur."

"And it will be the only one which you will see men of ordinary common sense will take. As you advance in science, you will discover your deficiencies, and then your countrymen will turn their minds more to the subject of education."

"The educator appears in England to be

little thought of," I remarked; "I had always an idea he was not respected as he should be, but I never imagined he was despised."

"Schoolmasters are not despised, when they deserve notice." La Fishe again looked at the door. "There are listeners sometimes, Mason, you should always be cautious here." He again went to the door and peeped through the key-hole; coming back very softly, he said, "There was some one there."

"Who could it be?"

"You'll soon find out *all* these secrets, my dear friend." He again went to the door. "Hush, Mason, he's here again!"

"Who is it listening to our conversation, Monsieur," I called out in a loud tone, feeling disgusted at that sort of "espionage." "He had better come in; La Fishe, open the door and see who it is."

La Fishe shook his head, and came softly to me, whispering, "It won't do, Mason; be quiet."

“Why should any one listen in that way?” I said, being enraged, and proceeding towards the door. “If you will not open it, Monsieur, I will!” whereupon I opened it, and saw the *shadow* of the Doctor’s well-known form turning round the corner. “I am disgusted, Monsieur, at such conduct,” I loudly remarked. Whether the learned Doctor heard me or not, I cared little at that moment. I once more closed the door, and we resumed our chat.

“You must be cautious, Mason, here, how you speak or act; everything is known; nothing takes place without the Doctor hearing of it.”

“Who can tell him?”

“That old Slylook tells him everything,” replied the Frenchman. “They will serve him out some day; we shall see before long.” Then, grinding his teeth and shaking his head, he added, “And I owe him a grudge, too.”

“What has he done?”

"Told the Doctor a parcel of lies."

"About you?"

"No, I shouldn't have cared if it had been about myself." La Fishe sighed, and was much agitated.

"Why should you feel annoyed about any other person's affairs?"

"Because it wounded him *here*," poor La Fishe pressed his heart heavily with both his hands; "the rascal knew he was telling untruths all the time," the Frenchman was more excited; "he did it for spite."

"Who was this friend?"

"He is gone, yonder; happier, I hope, poor fellow, he had a rough time of it here," the Frenchman covered his eyes with his hands and wept. "You little know, Mason," he said, after a few minutes of painful silence, "what he suffered; and upon his death-bed he told me a secret which I was never to divulge before I had revenged his death."

"Of whom are you speaking?"

"Of your predecessor, Mason;" La Fishe

hung down his head and sobbed; "the Doctor behaved very cruelly to him; he told me just before his death, that the Doctor had broken his heart and would be the death of him."

"You have promised to tell me something about this man," I observed; "I wish you would now satisfy my curiosity, Monsieur."

"I cannot, Mason; poor fellow, he was roughly used by the Doctor;" the French master again went to the door and listened. "He is here again, Mason," La Fishe softly added.

"Open the door, then, Monsieur," I shouted out; the next moment the door opened, and in walked Doctor Theophilus Blinkhum, —grave, composed, serious. With a firm step he approached me."

"Room rather warm, Mr. Mason, *eh?*" There was a sanguinary kind of a grin upon his features, which made him look perfectly hideous.

"It is somewhat close, I think, Doctor."

"Our thoughts sometimes make us *warm*, Mr. Mason, eh!" eyeing me with a ferocious snarl upon the upper lip. "I thought the Monsieur was here," looking round and not perceiving him anywhere; "do you know where he is gone, Mr. Mason?"

"I have no idea," I replied, carelessly.

"He talks *rather loud sometimes*, Mr. Mason, eh? better, perhaps, not to do so always, eh, Mr. Mason?" There was a fiendish light which appeared to flash across his features, making him look more like a demon than a human being. "What was he talking about, Mr. Mason, eh? did he say anything about me?" he approached me and grinning slyly, added, "eh! Mr. Mason?"

"I don't know, Doctor Blinkhum, that you have any right to expect me to satisfy you."

"Oh, *you* think so, do you, Mr. Mason?" malignly interrupted the Doctor; "he was not talking ABOUT ME, OF COURSE not, Mr. Mason; he never does, certainly not, Mr.

Mason." He strutted up and down the room for some time, talking to himself and shaking his head, with the evident idea that his mind was occupied with the reflections of no ordinary man; he was the grand, majestic orb, round which revolved only planets of an inferior degree; he could not admit of any antagonistic power to oppose his influence or detract from his brilliancy; no secondary position would ever be recognised by him; he was the veritable Dr. Theophilus Blinkhum, and would be "*secundum nulli*," or nothing at all. Hence, knowing his own weak points; and not probably feeling confident in his pretensions to an extensive possession of knowledge in general, or *anything* in particular, he was ever suspicious of everybody; and was in a constant state of agitation, from his apprehension that every one connected with him, was plotting against him in some way or other.

That he had been listening to our conversation was no doubt a fact. *That* he had

heard most of *that* conversation, was also an assumable truth. *That* he intended to attempt an extraction from me of my opinion both of himself and the French Professor, were also probabilities which I had reasonable grounds to believe. And *that* I did not intend to satisfy him upon these particular points, was also a fact which he might easily have gleaned from the manner in which I answered his furtive questions relating to Monsieur La Fishe.

"You find La Fishe a nice companion, Mr. Mason, I hope?" again commenced the crafty principal. "He tells you of most things, eh! Mr. Mason? It is very kind of him to do so, eh! Mr. Mason?" His eyes glared with a triumphant, dazzling brilliancy, indicative of revenge. "Don't you think so, Mr. Mason, eh?" he added, keeping his eyes steadily fixed upon my countenance.

"I am certainly indebted to him for a great deal of information, which I should not have obtained from any one else," I coolly replied.

"It is very kind of him, Mr. Mason," he satirically replied, still intently gazing at me. "I am sorry he has left the room, Mr. Mason," again looking round. "I wanted very much to see him just now, Mr. Mason," his eyes brightening. "I dare say you could find him for me, Mr. Mason, eh! don't you think so?"

"I don't know that I could, Doctor Blinkhum."

"Perhaps you would try, Mr. Mason?" slyly inquired the Doctor, still having his venomous eyes fixed full upon me.

Perceiving there was mischief in his intents, I was about to answer him in a more decided tone, when I was relieved from the unpleasantness of my position by the entrance of the Professor of French.

Doctor Blinkhum feigned not to perceive him, and with his honied tongue, though steeped in gall, observed—

"I value very highly the services of Monsieur La Fishe, Mr. Mason; I consider

him a great acquisition to my establishment." Then rolling his eyes about, until they alighted upon the person of the man whom he had so cunningly bespattered with his fulsome adulation, he continued, addressing him—

"I was just talking to Mr. Mason about you, Monsieur," in a most melting tone; "you agree together *pretty well*, I hope." Then looking at me with much craftiness, "Mr. Mason informs me you have told him a good deal of what has occurred here, Monsieur," his eyes again assuming a piercing savageness; "I think you have said too much, Monsieur; I don't know what good it could do you to tell him *so much* about his predecessor, Monsieur!"

La Fishe's hot blood was like a raging, boiling flood, which was bursting its boundaries, and approaching the Doctor menacingly, he demanded—

"Have I told Mr. Mason anything but the truth?"

"I am sure I cannot tell, Monsieur," evasively replied the Doctor.

"You know, Doctor Blinkhum, I have not," sternly replied La Fishe.

"I don't know anything about it, Monsieur," carelessly replied the sage Doctor; "Mr. Mason has told me you have informed him of all these particulars."

Poor La Fishe was becoming more incensed than ever against the Doctor, and would in all probability have given him some corporeal proof of his intense disgust, had not one of the domestics entered and informed the Doctor that there were visitors waiting to see him. The Doctor, in leaving the room, gave me a look full of meaning and significance, and honoured Monsieur La Fishe with a most polite and condescending bow.

After the Doctor had withdrawn, it was some time before either of us spoke. I saw by La. Fishe's excitement that he was scarcely able to control himself; at length he remarked—

“ I don’t believe a word of what the Doctor has said about you ; it is one of his old tricks, Mason. He does it with every master. I despise him.”

“ What can be his object ? what his motive ? ”

“ Evident enough, Mason ; he has seen that we are friendly, which he never likes to observe in any of us ; and therefore, his object is, to set every man against another.”

“ Why should he wish that ? ”

“ To prevent our talking about him. He knows that in the dissensions of his masters lies his security.”

“ It is a refined piece of trickery, Monsieur,” I observed, “ reflecting neither upon his honour nor character.”

“ Honour ! character ! ” interrupted La Fische. “ What claim has he either to the one or the other ? He has raised this school by cunning and deceit, and can only support it by shuffling and craftiness.” La Fische was too much annoyed with the hypocrisy of the

principal of Blinkhum Hall, to continue longer the conversation ; he approached the door, and taking my hand, observed—

“ This state of duplicity will not always last, Mason. The boys begin to see through the shallowness of the Doctor’s principles, and we shall before long find that he will pay the penalty for his dishonest dealings with his masters. Good night, Mason ; let us try to remember only the bright side of the glass ; though you and I now see its black side, we shall before long find Dr. Blinkhum will meet with his reward, when we shall be in a position to show him and those like him, who live upon the credulity of a blind and confiding public, that as water will always find its level, so these pretenders and impostors will have awarded them what they richly merit, and what their degrading usurpation of an honourable position so decidedly deserves.”

We parted ; La Fishe, full of indignation at the Doctor’s artful attempt to create a

breach between us ; and I, disgusted with myself that it was my misfortune to be so identified with a man, whose base intentions and cunning devices were so closely linked with my present.

How my mind yearned for the time when I could congratulate myself upon existing in an atmosphere less impregnated with the pestiferous breath of deceit!

How I envied that happy race whose life consists in daily toil ! “What happiness,” thought I, “do these untutored sons of care enjoy, ignorant of that splendid misery which adorns the outwardly respectable sojourners in life. With what keenness do the poor relish their hard earned comforts ! What bitterness do men like myself experience in the performance of the duties of an office which should be honourable, which is now identified with, and linked to, an existence of serfdom and degradation !”

CHAPTER XV.

MR. RALPH THORNTON'S EXPERIENCE.

AFTER Monsieur La Fishe had hinted that it was neither safe nor prudent to have my letters addressed at Blinkhum Hall, I had arranged with the post-master of the neighbouring town to keep back any letters which might be for me, until I should call for them. Accordingly, being in the town, I inquired at the post-office, when to my astonishment I had handed to me a huge packet addressed in the well-known writing of my friend Thornton, from whom I had not heard since we last

parted in London. I felt pleased to perceive from its cumbrous appearance, that he had not been idle, although slow in his correspondence.

Upon opening the packet I found it headed—

“*Mr. Ralph Thornton's Experience.*”

As it amused me vastly, and as I think my readers' taste in some degree accord with mine, I shall lay it before them in his own words “*in extenso.*”

“I started,” commences the once lively, thoughtless Ralph Thornton, “for my ‘new abode’ in capital spirits, the balmy breeze of the surrounding air infused throughout my veins a most exhilarating vigour, making me fancy that I was now at last a ‘*happy man.*’

“My finances being nearly exhausted, I found it expedient to select the cheapest conveyance to take myself, goods and chattels, to my new quarters. To carry out these economic views, I endeavoured to ascertain

the time when, and the place from whence; the omnibus started for 'Holythought,' the suburban village where I was for the future to be located. Having made every arrangement with my landlady for my departure, I set out, accompanied by a stout lad, who agreed to carry my traps to the city, for a coin sufficiently small to suit my pocket. We arrived there in time for me to see the conductor to arrange with him for the extra charge for my couple of boxes; and to get myself comfortably jammed in amongst a number of stout-built passengers.

"I know nothing more calculated to afford instruction to the thoughtful, or amusement to the gay, than the inside of an omnibus. There you meet with characters of the most opposite kind; *here* you see the lord with his aristocratic notions of etiquette, squeezed by the roughly-coated artizan; *there* you find the highly-scented 'exquisite' in disagreeable proximity to a hard working, toil-enduring mechanic; in the

corner yonder you notice a fashionably-attired, artistically-adorned lady ; opposite to her sits a humble, modestly-dressed servant girl, who probably is going to her 'place of all work,' or to some occupation, where by honest industry she is content to gain her livelihood and to live respected.

"Similar and dissimilar characters are to be seen at all times within the metropolitan omnibuses, particularly of an afternoon, towards the West-End ; and without attempting to give an outline of what is so often observed, I purpose to show you another phase of the same picture.

"The period selected by me for going to my 'new place' was at that time of the day when 'city men' are returning to their 'cottage *ornu's*' for dinner ; consequently I soon found the omnibus filled with these 'money-getting, and comfortable-looking men.' I must confess I looked, in more senses than one, '*rather small*' by the side of these jolly turtle-fed associates. Although

some appeared jovial (as though they had made a good hit in some speculation), others more serious, sedate, calculating—yet all had most unmistakeably written upon their frontlets the names of their '*Penates*'—

‘Business.—Money.’

There was in each and every one the same overhanging brow and wrinkled forehead; denoting acute suspicion, intense caution, an eye to business.

“Whilst sitting by these ‘magnates,’ I could not avoid contrasting their position with my own. I thought, ‘How easily do these men make their thousands, whilst I have to work hard, toiling early and late, for the small pittance which I shall receive.’ Their comfortable size and contented looks were in strange contrast with my thin delicate form, and thoughtful, heavy brow.

“Do not, I pray you, my dear Mason, think me jealous, envious, or discontented, because I tell you my reflections. On the contrary, I am the most contented man alive. I was

always thought so—by myself ! I am sure you must agree with me that it was not unnatural that such a train of thought, at a moment like this, should have an ascendancy in my mind ; making me feel rather inclined to grumble at everybody and everything ! However, we started, and I was now on my way for my ‘Agapemone.’ My city companions were soon in lively talk about various mercantile topics which did not at all interest me, so I continued curled up in my corner, like Diogenes in his tub, until my opposite traveller, probably in his own mind compassionating my dejected, cast-down appearance, kindly inquired—

“ ‘Are you going to any particular part of Holythought, sir ?’

“ ‘Yes !’ I replied, hesitatingly.

“ ‘Because Holythought is a long straggling village, and unless you know it pretty well you may be set down at some considerable distance from the place where you want to go.’

“ ‘Thank you, sir ; I am indebted to you for your caution,’ I replied.

“ ‘I suppose, though, you know something of the place?’

“ ‘Nothing at all.’

“ ‘What part do you wish to go to?’

“I hesitated, and paused whether I should tell him the exact place of my *future*; at last I said—‘I am going to the “Forcing Institution.”’

“ ‘Indeed!’ said my companion, opening his mouth; and with a strange yawn, leering at his friends—

“ ‘To the Rev. Zaccheus Cultshaw, I presume, sir?’

“ ‘Yes; I believe that is his name.’

“ ‘Oh, indeed!’ mysteriously ejaculated my inquisitive friend, giving another yawn, and looking about at his friends; then surveying me, he added—

“ ‘As a master, I suppose, sir?’

“ ‘Yes,’ I carelessly replied.

“ ‘Indeed! Hem!’ with the peculiar leer.

‘Do you expect to be pretty *comfortable* there, sir?’ opening his eyes, raising his eyebrows, and trying to look serious.

“‘I cannot tell; I certainly do hope to be so.’

“‘Oh! ah! it is most remarkable!’ exclaimed a gentleman at the farther end of the vehicle, at the highest pitch of his voice.

“‘What is so *remarkable*, sir?’ I asked, feeling somewhat nervous at his remark.

“‘I think,’ interposed the first spokesman, nodding to his friend, ‘it would be hardly fair to say anything more, or we may prejudice this young gentlemen against the establishment.’

“‘I don’t see that at all, friend,’ rejoined the other; ‘I think he ought to know where he is going.’

“The omnibus pulled up suddenly, and put a stop to our conversation.

“‘This is the *Forcing Institution*, sir,’ politely intimated the conductor, as he opened the door for my egress. I shrugged my shoulders, timidly looked out at the building; my head was giddy, my heart was sick. I stepped out I know not how;

saw my luggage safely landed, paid the conductor, again ventured to look up! saw the windows of the institution crammed with the heads of noisy boys.

“ ‘Good day, sir,’ said my inquisitive companion, holding out his hand; ‘I *hope* you will be *comfortable*.’

“ ‘Thank you, sir; I hope so, too.’

“The omnibus was in motion; I thought the conductor, as he mounted the steps, and shouted out to the driver, ‘All right,’ looked upon me with pity.

“The village of Holythought has been highly distinguished from time immemorial (so says the rumour) for piety, and—old ladies. The *gender* may be equivocal—the *fact* is undeniable. In this renowned village there is a religious purity in the atmosphere you breathe, which you do not experience elsewhere. My ignorance of this important fact made me unable to account for the peculiar sensations which seized me when I entered the portals of my new Para-

dise ; a smothering, burning pain oppressed me, a kind of spiritual manifestation overpowered me ; indeed, so intensely agonising were its effects, that when I was ushered into a most desolate, comfortless looking room, at the Forcing Institution, I sank down into a rickety, cushionless chair, and wept.

“ How long I had remained under this ‘religious influence’ I know not, but I heard issuing from some part of the room the shrill sound of a human voice.

“ ‘ How do you do, Mr. Thornton? I hope I have the pleasure of seeing you well.’

“ I looked up, and found myself in the presence of a little man, with a remarkably cunning, good-humoured face, who soon told me his name was Sharpnose, and that the Rev. Zaccheus Cultshaw had sent him to see if I wanted anything.

“ ‘ No, sir,’ I replied, moodily.

“ ‘ You’ll have a responsible post here, Mr. Thornton,’ remarked Mr. Sharpnose.

“ ‘ Shall I ? ’

“ ‘ Yes, you will indeed, Mr. Thornton,’ looking at me, with his eyes sparkling with mirth or cunning. ‘ The principal has spoken very highly of you to all the masters.’

“ ‘ Indeed,’ I musingly remarked. ‘ How many masters are there ? ’

“ ‘ Eight,’ replied Mr. Sharpnose. ‘ I think you are from Cambridge ? ’

“ ‘ Yes.’

“ ‘ I am Oxford *myself*,’ replied Mr. Sharpnose, pulling up his shirt-collar and standing very erect. ‘ We have two other gentlemen from Cambridge, and two more from Oxford.’

“ ‘ Your staff is rather strong then, Mr. Sharpnose.’

“ ‘ It is ; Mr. Cultshaw will have none but university men,’ rejoined Mr. Sharpnose, again pulling up his shirt-collar, and looking large. ‘ Except, of course, the modern language masters, who are not much looked upon.’ His fingers were now thrust into

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his hair. 'You know they are *not* university men, and *we* don't associate with them.' Mr. Sharpnose once more arranged his shirt-collar, and looked important.

" 'How many pupils are there, Mr. Sharpnose ?'

" 'We have this half-year nearly one hundred boarders, and then we have about forty what are called day-boarders.'

" 'It is a good school, then.'

" 'A *first-rate* place altogether, Mr. Thornton; everything is done in *capital style*,' replied Mr. Sharpnose; 'and you'll find the masters are extremely social and agreeable.' Mr. Sharpnose was becoming very patronising.

" 'I think Mr. Cultshaw is a Cambridge man?'

" 'He is,' replied the polite Mr. Sharpnose; 'an excellent scholar, took a high degree, was fellow of his college, now connected with all the learned societies in the metropolis.' Mr. Sharpnose was getting still

more social and eloquent in his description of the many rare qualities which the Rev. Zaccheus Cultshaw possessed.

“ ‘Will you like to take a survey of the premises, Mr. Thornton?’

“ ‘Thank you, I shall have no objection,’ I replied, being glad to go anywhere for a change of scene, and to escape the infliction of Mr. Sharpnose’s eloquence.

“ ‘We were soon busily occupied in the inspection of the various parts of the building which formed the Forcing Institution.

“ ‘Is this a chapel?’ I inquired, when we were near a Gothic-looking edifice.

“ ‘Yes, it is,’ replied Mr. Sharpnose; ‘we have prayers here every morning and evening, with two full services on a Sunday.’

“ ‘Quite a college life, Mr. Sharpnose.’

“ ‘Very much like it, indeed,’ replied my agreeable chaperon, trying to unfasten the door. ‘Our choir is celebrated for its great efficiency, and considered by excellent judges as equal to any in the metropolis.’

“ ‘ Indeed ! of whom is it composed ? ’

“ ‘ *Our pupils.* The organist is one of the *best* in his profession, and takes immense pains to teach them. I must say, Mr. Thornton, they do him credit, and when you hear them, I am sure you’ll be delighted.’

“ ‘ Mr. Cultshaw is an astronomer, I perceive,’ I remarked, as I saw at the end of the play-ground an observatory.

“ ‘ A *very excellent* one,’ replied my loquacious guide ; ‘ some of his calculations have astonished the “*savans*” of this and other countries.’

“ ‘ It is a delightful study,’ I remarked.

“ ‘ Do *you* understand it at all, Mr. Thornton ? ’ inquired my friend, with a quizzing look.

“ ‘ A *little*,’ I laconically replied.

“ ‘ It is one of Mr. Cultshaw’s pet subjects,’ said Mr. Sharpnose ; ‘ and he values his observatory more than—’

“ Mr. Sharpnose paused suddenly, and I saw in the distance the person of another master.

“‘That’s Mr. Lupkins,” continued my voluble friend, rather hurriedly. ‘A capital fellow, Mr. Thornton, *but*,’—Mr. Sharpnose seemed to be confused—‘*but* it won’t do to be too free with him.’ Mr. Sharpnose was afflicted with a cough. ‘I always fight shy of him *myself*, Mr. Thornton.’ Still Mr. Sharpnose’s cough troubled him. ‘Of course every one will act as he likes, *but*’—pausing and speaking in an under tone, as the master in question was drawing very near to us—‘you being a stranger here, you know, Mr. Thornton, a hint of this kind may perhaps be of service to you.’

“Before I could reply, the dangerous master was by our side.

“‘Mr. Thornton, I presume?’ said Mr. Lupkins, extending his hand. ‘I am glad to have the pleasure of making your acquaintance.’ Mr. Sharpnose became very fidgetty, and appeared desirous to make our conversation as brief as possible, so we were soon retracing our steps towards the house ;

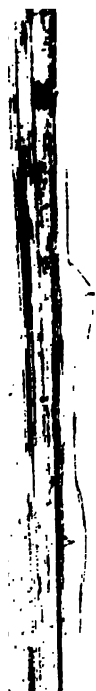
and being tired of Mr. Sharpnose's over-anxiety to convince me that the Reverend Zaccheus Cultshaw was the *only* clever man in the world, and that the Forcing Institution conducted by him was the *only* perfect one of its kind in the United Kingdom, I requested to be shown to my room, which the over-polite Mr. Sharpnose would insist upon doing himself. Upon our getting there he was still full of his laudation of the principal, and would have ensconced himself there, had I not intimated to him in 'words polite' that I wished to unpack my boxes and arrange little matters for my comfort and convenience. Yet even in this unpleasant duty he offered to assist me, which, upon my declining, he at last withdrew, and I was thankful to be alone.

"I threw myself in a chair, and began to con over all that I had seen and heard, and came to the conclusion that my 'future' was not so transcendentally brilliant as the oily tongue of Mr. Silvertongue had at the

first painted, or as my own lively imagination had figured it !

“Sleep and I had quarrelled that night ; at least I suppose so, for we did not come into contact until the morning.

END OF VOL. I.



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